Myers Park Baptist Church

Charlotte, North Carolina

Collected Remembrances

1943 ✠ 1993

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We, the family of Myers Park Baptist Church,
are pleased to share some of our favorite
recollections of our time together
during the past fifty years.

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Alice Berman Recalls Her Experiences as Myers Park Baptist Church's First Music Director

(As Told to Alice Hickey)

Before coming to Myers Park Baptist Church in 1943, I had the musical positions at First Presbyterian Church and at the old Westminster Church in Trenton, New Jersey. Dr. Williamson, President of the Westminster Choir College in Trenton, of which I am a graduate, called to tell me he had recommended me for choir work at a new church in Charlotte. His personal friend, Mrs. Frank Dowd, had talked to him, and he urged my husband Michael and me to go to Charlotte for an interview.

At that time trains and planes were being used as troop conveyances, and travel was very difficult, but we finally got an upper berth on a troop train for the trip—the only thing available. We arrived at the old Charlotte Depot at the end of Trade Street and were met by a man in an immaculate white linen suit with a white Panama hat. It proved to be Mr. James Bryant, a member of the Music Committee. He drove us to the Dowd home where we had lunch, and after our visit and interview, we returned to Trenton to think about the job.

Michael had been assured that there would be many business opportunities in Charlotte. His recently-diagnosed heart murmur had kept him from accepting a commission in the service. Therefore, it was a good time for us to make a move, and we let Mrs. Dowd and Mr. Bryant know that I would accept the position.

When I came, our church services were held in the Belk Chapel on the Queens College campus. It was my responsibility to get choirs and a music program going, and we soon had choirs spilling over everywhere as people were eager to be a part of our innovative music program. We ended up with ten vested choir groups and a total of 450 members involved. Marilyn Fenwick was my first assistant and our full-time organist. All of this work resulted in choirs that we could be proud of.

When the Sanctuary dedication service was held on February 17, 1952, our choir gave an outstanding performance. That was the biggest event in my professional life and something I'll never forget.

One important aspect of my choir work was helping qualified high school students attend summer vocal camp. We started a scholarship program for these participants, and many of the recipients went to Westminster Choir College.

The entire music program was a united effort on the part of so many enthusiastic people, but the one person whom I credit with creating such a high-quality music department is Lib Dowd. She wanted so much for music to be a vital part of the church activities, and she was always very

supportive of me. I found the ten years that I was Music Director to be a fine and very worthwhile experience, and I am grateful for them.

[Alice Berman has been a member of our Myers Park Baptist Church family since 1943 and served as our Music Director from 1943 to 1952.]

Tidbits

Jim Berry

Our Famous AMEN Sunday!

Dr. Carlyle Marney, Bill Schwantes and I came to Myers Park Baptist Church in August/September of 1958 from First Baptist Church of Austin, Texas, where "Amen" was not sung at the end of each hymn. One morning soon after we arrived, at the close of the 8:30 a.m. service, Dr. Marney gave an invitation for any who would like to join the church. We began the hymn and as we approached the close of the second stanza, he turned to me from the center of the chancel steps and indicated he wished to end the hymn. We had not previously discussed this possibility and whether to sing "Amen" (it was used at the end of each hymn here then) at the end of the second stanza just because we were closing the hymn. I made a snap judgment and mouthed to the choir and to Martha Stepp, the organist, "No Amen." When the organ and choir stopped, Dr. Marney sang a lusty and beautiful bass "Ah————————men" while turning slowly toward me as if to say, "Where did you go?"

Before the 11:00 service, we decided that in such a situation, we would add the "Amen" even if it were after only one stanza of the hymn. So, at the close of the 11:00 service, Dr. Marney again offered an invitation saying, "Will you come as we sing the first stanza," meaning don't hesitate. Martha Stepp understood him to mean there would be only one stanza, so at the end of it she played a very positive "Amen" as everyone else prepared to sing stanza two. I quickly looked at her and said "No!" and she went into the second stanza without missing a beat, so we had stanza one, "Amen" and stanzas two and three, "Amen." Thus defining our "Amen Sunday."

Ecclesiastes or Ecclesiasticus?

One Sunday morning in the early years of Carlyle Marney's ministry at Myers Park Baptist while Emory Trainham was still Associate Pastor, Emory was to read the Scripture lesson in worship as was often the procedure. When the appointed time came for the reading, Emory stood

at the lectern, opened the big pulpit Bible and began to read. In a minute or so, I saw Dr. Marney straighten up and look toward me. He raised his eyebrows and shrugged his shoulders as if to say, "What are we hearing?" I surely didn't know. It was my practice to read the Scriptures before planning the worship and I knew I had not read that one. Emory kept reading, reading, and reading. He finally finished and sat down. Emory leaned over to Dr. Marney and said, "You will need to read your own Scripture. I never did get to it." As it happened, when he opened the book, it came to Ecclesiasticus in the Apocrypha instead of Ecclesiastes in the Old Testament. Emory didn't notice it until he began reading and then it was too late. He kept reading trying to find a good place to stop and finally gave up and just quit. Probably very few people figured out what had happened, except that the Scripture lesson seemed very long and disconnected. From that time on, I would arrive early enough to mark the day's reading.

The Lost Chord

When Dr. Carlyle Marney was our Senior Minister, it was his request that I sing a solo every Sunday. Some of you may have wondered why I sang so much. Now it can be told.

One Sunday (we were having two morning services then) I sang in the early service and things went all right. In the second service, Robert (Bob) McClernon, one of the other ministers, was assisting and Lauretta Short was playing the organ. Lauretta had told me between services that she did not have time for breakfast before coming to the early service. The solo I was singing had an organ interlude after about a page and a half, and there was a loose page in the center of the publication.

We began the solo with all confidence, and when the second page came up, Lauretta noticed her next page was page four instead of page two. I noticed immediately that the accompaniment began to drag and get quieter and quieter. In my mind's eye I could see Lauretta slowly fainting from lack of sustenance. I fully expected to hear a loud crash from the organ when she finally fell on the keys. Instead, when I finished the part before the interlude, she simply came to a tonic chord and stopped. Pages two and three of the solo had been misplaced after the early service, mixed with other music. She simply followed me for half a page or so before stopping, and that takes real talent!

Following the service, Bob McClernon spoke to me about how he liked the solo, but said, "I thought it was a little short!" How right he was.

Youth and Age

One of the joys of working at Myers Park Baptist Church was the privilege of meeting great people of the world who spoke there. This, of

course, includes our own three Senior Ministers: Dr. Heaton, Dr. Marney, and Dr. Owens.

When Dr. Marney was Senior Minister, he invited Dr. Clarence Jordan to preach. Dr. Jordan was the founder of Americus, Georgia, a sort of commune for poor people. He is also the author of numerous books, including *The Cotton Patch Gospel*. Dr. Jordan was to give one of the prayers and at the time we didn't have a lectern on the pulpit side of the chancel. He asked me if there was something available on which he could put his manuscript. He said, "You know, when I was a young man, I preached without notes. When I became fifty years old, I began using notes. Now that I am an old man, I use full manuscript." We who are "old" know the feeling and the rest of you also will experience it soon enough.

[Jim Berry has been a member of our Myers Park Baptist Church family since 1958 and served as our Minister of Music from 1958 to 1987.]

Recollections of Myers Park Baptist Church

Bob Bryant

Some of my recollections are

- Of meetings of the founders at the old YMCA on South Tryon Street and in the various homes of these men. Expressions of concern that Sunday School classes at the churches they belonged to were not getting to their children. That was one of the major concerns they had, and their concern was valid. Look what came from those meetings in terms of Christian education!
- The old Hut that served as offices, a place for Family Nights, Boy Scout quarters, on and on—until Pop LeNeave and some others got together and built an additional Hut in order to have some more room for the burgeoning church.
- Russell Crump taking pictures by the hundreds of nearly every function that happened there (I wonder where they are).
- Sarah and I singing in the first choirs. They were hard up to let me in, but we had a wonderful time singing for Harvey Woodruff and Alice Berman.
- The first Search Committee for a senior minister. Again, the daytime and evening meetings. Dinners and receptions for possible choices as they came to Charlotte.
- The final decision to call George Heaton. Church services in Burwell

Hall at Queens College and later in Belk Chapel. George's sermon, "He Whom a Dream Hath Possessed," was memorable and applies even today.

- The annual meetings of deacons before Christmas where a lovely dinner was served in the Hut. Each deacon knew what he was there for. After about six such annual dinners, the church was able to contract for the beautiful Sanctuary we now use and love so, and the money to pay for it was on hand.
- The story (as it was told to me) of the Search Committee meeting with Carlyle Marney in Austin about coming to Myers Park; he was not absolutely sure that he wanted to come. Several of the committee members were in a nineteenth floor hotel room with Marney when one member said to him, "If you don't come to Charlotte, I will be a sinner all my life. If you don't say, 'Yes,' I'm going to throw you out of this window." Marney later said that moment carried a lot of weight in his decision to come here.
- Early after the war, Mr. Ed Burnside doing an outrageous thing starting a couples Sunday School class. That was unheard of! Traditionally, women and men did not share the same class. That class spawned many leaders of our church.
- The Sunday for signing the Charter Member Book. I happened to be home on leave, so Sarah and I were able to be present and sign that document fifty years ago. Good grief!
- A delightful man from middle Europe (Austria, I think) becoming Business Manager for our church in the early fifties. His name was Hans Newalt. During the summer he came to our home to teach our sons to speak German. They resisted, to a degree, having to give two mornings during summer vacation. Sarah and I insisted. Hans heard our conversation. He said, "You don't ask them if they want to learn German; you tell them they will." Hans was a good friend, a good disciplinarian. Jamie and Frank may not have learned a lot of German, but they learned much about how to live from Hans.
- The years teaching seventh graders in our church school—some of my most memorable experiences at our church. As even those young people I had in those classes will admit now, seventh graders are not the easiest ones to work with. The tricks I played, trying to keep their attention—like tearing up a five dollar bill as I talked. I have never told them until now that I pasted in back together and got a new one at the bank. Or the Sunday they came to the classroom and I had placed each chair so that no two chairs faced each other. I had so much fun in those years. It is a special thing for me to see so many of those seventh graders taking leadership roles in our church, and some of them might even have seventh graders themselves. I would not try to list their names, my seventh graders, for fear of missing a few, but I know who they are, and they know who they are. Each of them is special to me.

- This church has been special to me. We have a wonderful heritage here and a great mission to pass on to our grandchildren. I still want to be there when things happen in the future.

[Bob Bryant has been a member of our Myers Park Baptist Church family since 1943.]

Remembrances of the Early Days

Don Bryant

Raising the Budget

Raising the budget was different in the early days of the church. All of the men in the church were invited to dinner in the Hut (the wooden building that the church built where the Sanctuary now stands). The ladies of the church cooked a marvelous meal which included oyster casseroles, country ham, fried chicken, roast beef and so on. After dinner the door was locked (figuratively), the needs for funds was described, and pledge cards were distributed. After much soul-searching, the cards were signed and the total was determined. If it came up to the budget, there was much rejoicing and satisfaction. If it did not reach the goal, the pledge cards were passed out again, and, after some exhortation, they were again filled out. This process was continued until the budget was fully subscribed. How many years this process took place I can't remember, but for a number of years, it was a very successful way to meet our budget needs.

The Three Arches in the Chancel

As you have noticed, there are three arches in the chancel, the last being over the beautiful stained glass window. Mr. Fink, the architect from Philadelphia, had designed the middle arch with a different curve from the other two.

One day when the church was about two-thirds finished and the arches had been completed, my father (James R. Bryant, one of the founders), and Mrs. Lib Dowd (wife of Frank, Sr., a founder), who were both very involved in the building of the Sanctuary, met at the church construction site to view the progress. (I had been invited to go along by my father for whom I worked.)

I remember standing there on the concrete floor while Mrs. Dowd and Dad decided that all three arches should have the same curve and that

the center one should be torn out and done again. Mr. Fink was there and he graciously agreed.

Sunday School Graduation in the Dell at Queens College

In the early years in the Youth Sunday School Department, tests were given each Sunday. Each person was graded, and at the end of the senior year in high school, a valedictorian was determined and a graduation ceremony was held with the seniors wearing their high school robes—all very important and serious. Other activities were acknowledged at the same time.

During one of those years, I had served as Scout Master of the church troop and, as such, had a report to make and people to recognize at the graduation ceremony. I sat on the improvised stage beside a very nice-looking young man who had been named valedictorian. When it came time for me to speak, I did in a very halting, amateurish manner. Immediately after my report, young Charles Kuralt (seated beside me) gave his valedictory speech in such an elegant way that it would have done credit to the great Edward R. Murrow! (I felt a bit diminished!)

Signing as a Charter Member

After many meetings by the founders and others, finally, the day came for charter members to officially sign. I distinctly remember that day, sitting in the old Queens College Auditorium, waiting my turn to go down front and sign. Two days later I left to enter the Army Air Corps to learn to fly airplanes.

Choir Recitals

Our choir has always been a volunteer choir. That, obviously, was the only way I could become a member. Everything went very well except, for a time, when Alice Berman, our director, required each member to sing a solo at a recital before other choir members. The recital was a black-tie affair, and, for the most part, was very elegant. The other part was when I, and a couple of others, had to sing our solos. I will never forget the words of the two pieces I sang—"Sylvia" and "Bless This House." I was so nervous and so scared when I sang "Sylvia" that I was at least five notes ahead of Lauretta (Short) when I finished (no matter how she hurried). I probably set the choir program back two or three years. (It was a lot of fun, though, and we all got enjoyment out of the effort.)

Family Nights

The highlight of the Family Nights was a ten- or twelve-minute talk by Dr. Heaton. Those I attended were after World War II, and they gave me a very warm, wonderful feeling after having been away for three years.

[Don Bryant has been a member of our Myers Park Baptist Church family since 1943.]

Memories of 50 Years in Myers Park Baptist Church

Sarah Bryant

When I think of our years spent in this church, I remember some of the best experiences of my whole life—the years of spiritual growth, the times of joy and of sorrow—and of the support that this church has given.

Bob's father, Jamie Bryant, was one of the twelve founders. Bob and I were young marrieds, having been married early in 1942. We were fortunate enough to have been around when those men were shaping the "dream that possessed them," and we remember signing the roster that made us charter members when Bob came home on leave from the Army Air Force in 1943.

How great it was to get our first minister, George Heaton, and later to watch as the steeple was placed on our beautiful new Sanctuary. It caused almost a physical impact. We felt so united in our purpose. We were knowing what Church was about.

The memories flow from those early days in the Huts where everything happened—Scouts, Circle meetings, Family Nights, choir practice, deacons meetings, parties, dances for the teens and for church school adults. There was a spiritual aura around it all.

Oh, there were hayrides I remember with the high school crowd, the retreats to the mountains, and the great excursions to Green Lake. We learned new things all the way.

Do you remember when the "King of the Hoboes" used to pay us an annual visit in church? He usually came sometime in the spring—all dressed in his colorful clothes with his long hair and beard and a bright scarf around his neck. He would walk into the Sanctuary about fifteen minutes before eleven o'clock, walk up to the second row, and sit directly under the pulpit. Every year he came. When he didn't come one year, we all wondered where he could be. Someone heard that he had died. It was sad to realize we had lost our friend who had quietly come and quietly slipped away.

I remember how George Heaton helped us all to become one family. In a very caring way, he remembered everyone's name and birthday and made each person feel important. He was so right for us at the time.

Then, the memorable and beloved Carlyle Marney came. With his special brand of humor and his entrancing poetic language, he could challenge me to study, seek truths and to stretch my faith in ways that I never thought I could, and he taught us to be priests to each other.

Once there was an issue that we were working on that I thought every person in our church surely would support, but they did not. I was so disappointed that I cried. Marney said to me, "Honey, you must remember that it is better to bless those who come, but don't grieve over those who don't." These words have helped me more times than I can count and stay with me always.

Gene Owens came to us and has been our teacher, our preacher who has been willing to be "talked back to." He has carried us far into this present day and has had the courage to step out and be counted when hard social issues were at hand. He has trusted that we, too, could have courage to stand for what we believe in helping our less fortunate in this community.

My children and my grandchildren have grown and been nurtured in Christian ways by the great people who have built and who belong to this church family. Now, we are in our fourth generation of the dream. My oldest granddaughter was married here last year—and so the dream goes on...and the memories....

[Sarah Bryant has been a member of our Myers Park Baptist Church family since 1943.]

Interview with George Buck

Whalen Hickey

One of the people to whom I feel a strong debt is Tebee Hawkins, an architect. When I came to town, I was interviewed by his partner and given a job at his office. Soon after, Tebee came to me and asked me where I went to church and I said, "Well, I'm a Baptist and I haven't really chosen one in town yet." So he invited me to come to Myers Park Baptist and even went so far as to ask another guy to come by and pick me up and bring me to church. That was very helpful in getting me involved and helped ease my way into membership in the church.

As a student I had sung at the high school down in my hometown in Columbia, but all through college I had not had an opportunity but evidently had had a latent desire to sing. So Jim Berry, our former music director here, helped to bring it out as he did not restrict anyone from

being in the choir as long as they tried out, came to rehearsals and did not have too bad a voice. So I really came to appreciate good church music—good classical music. I think that was one of Jim's strong points: collecting good classical church music.

I must say also that I am indebted to all the teachers in our church's schools for helping us raise our three children. The church was like an extended family when it came to rearing our children.

The church Sunday School program's philosophy was to be open to new trends, insights and perspectives in looking at Scriptures, trying to find meaning in life and what it means to be a Christian and to grow. I feel that the Christian education that has been available has been outstanding. Both my family and I have benefited.

I feel so full of gratitude also for Carlyle Marney and Gene Owens in that they evidently spent so much time on their thought-provoking sermons, so different each Sunday. That has made my being in the choir so much easier, and it has helped me and my family grow and develop as we have listened to those sermons.

I think the church has been unusually innovative and has had a vision that has been very interesting.

[George Buck has been a member of our Myers Park Baptist Church family since 1963.]

Myers Park Baptist in the '60s

Don and Priscilla Bynum

When we joined the church in the fall of 1967, one of the things that was readily apparent was the strong leadership of the women of the church. We had been members of a number of traditional Baptist churches where women did most of the work but were not really acknowledged for the indirect leadership roles they actually had. In this church they were not yet deacons, but it was obvious they were strong and acknowledged leaders. Women like Lib Dowd, Pris Upchurch, Bess Durham Scott, Bea Blankenship, Lillian Bryant, Ina Short, Bonnie Cone, and others could hold their own in any meeting and did! From the stories we have heard, that was true from the beginning of the church. There may not have been any women in the meeting of the first ten, but we can imagine they had a significant influence even before that meeting began; the training for our children was one of the prime reasons for founding a new church.

We believe, at least in this area in Baptist churches, this church was a leader in ordaining women as deacons, and later at least two were ordained as ministers. Proper recognition and calling forth!

Let's acknowledge and celebrate the important leadership roles women

have had in shaping the spirit, texture, and fiber of Myers Park Baptist Church. The women in the church today have built on that strong heritage and the calibre of women has not really diminished nor has their strong influence and leadership.

[Priscilla and Don Bynum have been members of our Myers Park Baptist Church family since 1967.]

An Old Prayer and A New Approach

Osee Childress

When we first joined the church about 1956, we also joined a newly-formed Sunday School class of young married couples. Because the established class for that age group had grown extremely large, this new one was badly needed, and Dr. Heaton had volunteered to teach the class to help ensure its success.

One Sunday when Bob McClernon, the Assistant Minister, was substituting for Dr. Heaton as the teacher, he was leading the class in "The Lord's Prayer." We were all mumbling along, saying it by rote as we tend to do, when Bob abruptly stopped! There was absolute silence. It quickly became apparent that Bob had forgotten the words and so had everyone else! After a long, awkward pause, I finally said, "Amen," and with a few laughs, the class continued with no comment on our memory lapse.

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When I was President of the Women of the Church in 1968 and 1969, the Board was composed of the officers of the Women of the Church as well as all the circle leaders. Once a week for each of those two years, the Board met to focus on some less traditional issues for women: developing deeper, one-on-one relationships and some social activism such as our letter-writing efforts regarding the death penalty. Additionally, at the instigation of Betty Jo Hamrick, we began the drive to get women on our Board of Deacons.

I do think that some seeds were planted during those years that have since borne fruit and are continuing to do so. In return I came to appreciate the quiet (sometimes noisy) power that women had shown before I got there.

[Osee Childress has been a member of our Myers Park Baptist Church family since 1957.]

A Welcoming Sunday School

Bob and Mary Clare

Myers Park Baptist Church has been a great source of church for us, a small-town couple with two children, arriving in Charlotte, North Carolina from Salem, New Hampshire, the day after Halloween in 1965. Jim and Jane found Sunday School interesting, and I found my niche in the Fidelis Bible Class. A short time later Bob was at home in the Baracca Class, now the Baracca-Chesney Class. John Wagster, a good Bible teacher, has had and continues to have a great influence on Bob.

In 1973 my mother, Velma Hickey, came to live with us and was welcomed into the Philathea Class.

We have always felt a strong sense of caring within our Sunday School classes, especially in times of happiness and sorrow.

[Bob and Mary Clare have been members of our Myers Park Baptist Church family since 1971.]

A Discipleship Retreat

Liz Clary

The Discipleship Class of 1985 ended the year with a weekend retreat at Ocean Isle Beach. Bob and Connie Maccubbin and Jim and Tillie Tice gave us the use of their beach houses to accommodate the fourteen of us who went. Dr. Dick Sutton, then a member of our church staff as Minister of Pastoral Care and serving as the leader of the Discipleship Class, drove the church van.

Our total program of discussion and recreation taught us Dick's genius as a group developer. We were confronted by and challenged to express our real selves. What is my philosophy of religion? How comfortable am I with letting go of an "us" and "them" concept? Do I have to like all the yo-yos in the world to affirm them? Do I reserve qualifications or options or conditions in my affirmation of others? Do I sometimes think secretly that God could have done better? In short, under Dick Sutton's leadership, we were led to face up to what a Covenant Community embraces. We began to see that it is not that we are not different, but that the differences among us make no difference. We became thinkers!

Our morning worship on Sunday was a participatory one as each spoke of what the retreat had meant to that one personally. Weaknesses and strengths, ignorance and wisdom, need and abundance, defeat and power, hurt and healing—all were revealed. We participated in a Communion Service which consisted of May Lou Buck's home-baked bread and a jug

of grape juice left from breakfast.

We closed with a dedication service in which we commissioned each one for Christian service with the laying-on of hands and accepted that we were ordained into a life where we would seek harmony in intention voiced or/and in deed done.

Dick Sutton taught me a fuller meaning of "The Man With a Blue Guitar."

They said, "You have a blue guitar,
You do not play things as they are!"
The man replied,
"Things as they are
are changed, upon the blue guitar."
Wallace Stevens

[Liz Clary has been a member of our Myers Park Baptist Church family since 1984.]

Real Cowboys

Edith Collins

Soon after Dr. Marney came to Myers Park Baptist Church, his horses arrived by way of two Texas cowboys who brought them in horse trailers. At that time I was teaching four-year-olds in our Through-the Week School, and our playground had temporary fencing (because of construction on the Great Hall) which extended to a point close to the brick driveway that goes down to Queens Road East.

When the children saw the two "real cowboys" coming up the walk, they excitedly ran to the point in the fence. The cowboys, who looked weary, dirty, tanned, and weathered in their well-worn boots and hats and with smiles that showed many missing teeth, asked the children where they could find Dr. Marney. While someone went for him, the children talked to their new friends, the "real cowboys," and asked if they might see the horses. We did. One of the horses was named Susie Parker. From then on, Marney kept them at Lex Marsh's place on Providence Road.

During the two days that the cowboys were here, the church had a father/son barbeque at the Buffalo Ranch outside of Concord. That was a fun and exciting evening for my husband Bruce and son David.

The children talked about the "real cowboys" and their dirty boots and their lassos long after they were gone.

[Edith Collins first became a member of our Myers Park Baptist Church family in 1952.]

The Impact of Myers Park Baptist Church on Our Lives

Thomas L. Cordle, Jr. and Carol Couric Cordle

Growing up in Myers Park Baptist Church in the '50s was a unique experience for both of us. In our Church School and at Fellowship hour we studied the Bible and we learned what our beliefs are. Each Sunday morning we were tested, and we even received report cards.

As children we felt very much a part of the church. Birthday letters from Dr. Heaton came to even the youngest of us and were treasured. We remember Family Night suppers cooked by Jessie, Sunday School and church services at Queens, church picnics, church camps and retreats, ice cream parties, Christmas dances, and our wedding in 1960.

Bob Poerschke (and later Bob McClernon) provided so many opportunities for us such as our trips to Green Lake which became a very important part of our spiritual training as we got to know church leaders and other young people form all parts of the country. We also developed leadership skills that have stayed with us through our adult lives in the church.

Our music program was second to none with Alice Berman and then Harvey Woodruff giving us wonderful training in church music, and the opportunity to attend vocal camp at Westminster was an experience that lasts a lifetime. As children we sang under the direction of Dr. Williamson and the Hedgepaths who were experts in the field of choral music.

After we went away to school, we always came back to church on holidays and in the summer because that's where our friends gathered. Those friendships are still close even though there may be years between meetings.

Because of the commitment of our parents and the staff at Myers Park Baptist, church has been of prime importance in our family. As Elders in the Presbyterian Church, we have both looked back on our experiences at Myers Park Baptist as an example of what we would like to see in our church today.

We rejoice in the fifty years of Myers Park Baptist and are happy we were there for many of them.

[Carol Couric Cordle was a member of our Myers Park Baptist Church family from 1949 to 1965, and Thomas Cordle was a member of our Myers Park Baptist Church family from 1952 to 1965.]

Charlie and Dr. Marney's Famous Christmas Eve Sermon

Marie Couric

In 1965 Dr. Marney was asked to deliver the Christmas Eve service to be shown live on national television by CBS. The service was to be televised from our Myers Park Baptist Church Sanctuary.

My family and I arrived at the church at least an hour and a half before the service and found the church already full. We got seats on the very back row.

Just before the service began, Dr. Marney stood at the back for a few minutes, waiting for his signal to start down the aisle. I could tell he was excited and also very nervous.

My husband Charlie had been asked to serve as one of the deacons collecting the offering, so he was seated on the front row. During the service the television camera took pictures of the Sanctuary and the congregation and showed the front row several times. Some of our friends and relatives who were watching the service saw Charlie, and he received calls and letters saying they had seen him. One friend that he grew up with called and said he thought Charlie was an Episcopalian and wanted to know when he had become a Baptist.

Dr. Marney's sermon that night proved to be very controversial. The comment that I heard most frequently was that it was inappropriate because it had not been about a traditional Christmas theme.

[Marie Couric has been a member of our Myers Park Baptist Church family since 1945.]

Fellowship Class, Couples II

Lucy Daves

I shall always remember January 5, 1951. It was on that day that my family (Clyde Daves, our four-year-old son, Carson Daves, and I) moved from our home in Shelby, North Carolina, to our home on Hastings Drive in Charlotte. The move required three months of decision-making about my parents, family, friends, and church. The first Sunday we went with my sister, Veva Spangler, and her family to the Myers Park Baptist Church service, meeting old friends and making new friends. It was from the Spanglers that we had heard much about the church and Dr. George Heaton, and we knew that this was where we wanted to be.

At that time the Sunday School class of sixty members was meeting in the Ninniss Building of Queens College with Mr. George Fields as teacher

and S.E. and Anna Callahan as class president. In the following years we also met in the Hut, the parlor of the old Efird house, the science room of Queens College and the second floor of the Education Building.

After a few years we were divided into two classes with Mr. George Fields and Mr. Ed Burnside as teachers. Some of my close friends and I went to the Burnside class which was strong and active, and its members served in many capacities in the church.

In the beginning we had a class party once a month with the Social Committee serving as hostess. Our parties were always fun and well attended. At Christmas we met in the Great Hall (after it was built) or had open house in some member's home. Our annual summer picnic was very special--we would meet in some member's back yard with each bringing a picnic basket. As years went by, we decided to have only four parties a year: a fall party, an open house at Christmas, a spring party and our summer picnic. Other events brought us together at various times.

Although our class is smaller now (about fifty members), the Christian spirit is still very much in evidence. We are a kind, loving, and caring class, keeping in touch with the sick at all times and helping when needed.

We have had many outstanding teachers. Our present one is Liz Clary, whom we all love. Her background in studying the Bible and biblical history, her carefully prepared text, and her artistry in public speaking result in her pupils' sitting spellbound throughout the course of each lecture.

I have been class historian through the years and have kept records of the class. My first two scrapbooks are in the Archives in our church, and I am now working on my third book.

I wish I could put in writing what this class and church have meant to me through the years. I thank God for every remembrance of the years that I have been a member of the Myers Park Baptist Church and for our three outstanding pastors who have served us well: Dr. George Heaton, Dr. Carlyle Marney, and Dr. Eugene Owens.

[Lucy Daves has been a member of our Myers Park Baptist Church family since 1951.]

Interview with Clyde Dickson, Jr. (Dick) and His Sister, Cecelia Dickson Stewart

(As reported by Alice Hickey)

Dick: My earliest memory of our church is when I was a little boy following my father around Sunday afternoons when he was taking a survey for the church before the church was really founded. We explained that we were forming a new church and needed to know how many people would be interested in participating in a new Baptist church in the area. We went down Selwyn Avenue, Queens Road and the other neighboring streets.

Cecelia: Our family had been attending Myers Park Presbyterian. One afternoon my father was talking to a Mr. Belk and he told him that would be our last Sunday there, for we were going to start services in the old Efird house.

Dick: Cecelia mentioned the other day one of the biggest things she remembers, and I do too, is the family night dinners. Everybody in the church came and all of us were real close. We can name all of the families that had kids our age.

Cecelia: For the family night dinners Mrs. Dowd located and trained a very fine cook named Jessie, who later became a very fine caterer here in town.

Dick: There was a tremendous feeling of unity, both during the war and right after the war.

Cecelia: Every time the doors opened, we all showed up.

I remember one Sunday that we had a fair in the front yard of the church, but I don't remember if it was to raise money or just to have fun. We had such a good time. That was the first time I'd ever seen a Polaroid camera. Mr. Martin was taking pictures with a Polaroid and he took a picture of Dick too.

Dick: The church was small and intimate until the Sanctuary was built. Then, from the very time that the Sanctuary was dedicated, the membership increased at a rapid rate. The church which began at first with very humble beginnings grew into a very large church.

Cecelia: Actually, at the dedication of the Sanctuary, so many people were already inside that we couldn't get in! And we were an hour early! We couldn't even get into the basement. I was in college at the time—I came home in order to go to the dedication and couldn't even get in. It was such a pretty church that we really think that people wanted to see it.

Dick: Also, it was the first air-conditioned church and the dedication was on a warm spring day.

Interviewer: Does anyone in the church stand out in your memory as having a profound influence upon you as you were growing up?

Cecelia: There were staff people. There was Bob Poerschke, the head of the young people.

Dick: And Emory Trainham, an assistant pastor.

Cecelia: Oh, yes. As a matter of fact, when I got married, he performed the ceremony for us because Dr. Heaton was out of town.

Now, about Bob Poerschke—I think he was the youth minister. We had dances in the Hut, a temporary building, until our church was finished. In fact, we had the best Christmas dance in Charlotte one year. And we had big bands. It was fun!

The Heatons used to go on a lot of retreats with us. We'd leave on a Friday for a retreat at Montreat or Wildacres. In the summertime we'd always go up there for a week or so.

Cecelia: Mrs. Heaton was my Sunday School teacher for a long time. She kind of went along with our group.

Dick: My first and favorite Sunday School teacher was Mrs. George Bailey. That dates back to 1945, I think, and it was at that time the church gave me this Bible, the one that I am holding in my hand. This was my very first Bible. [Reporter's note: The Bible shows a lot of use, a lot of wear.]

Then choir practice—*everyone* sang in the choir ["even those who couldn't hold a tune in a bucket—like me!" interjected Cecelia.] Mrs. Berman was over all the choirs and Miss Lauretta Bombara was our organist. I remember how excited we were when she was going to marry Ralph Short. Anne Williams, a choir member, later sang professionally on the radio for the Firestone Hour.

Cecelia: During the week in the afternoon, Dr. Heaton used to hold meetings with groups of our young people and discussed certain subjects such as drinking. He wanted us to be informed before we got into these things. And all went!

Dick: Dr. and Mrs. Heaton both were constantly working with us young people and had a very strong impact on our lives. But I think the families had as much an effect on our youth as did the church staff. Certainly Dr. Heaton's leadership was important, but the closeness of the families had a lasting influence on all of us.

The leaders in this church, the founders, have gone on and made a lot of marks in this community—have been very benevolent people, have done a lot in the surrounding community, did a lot for Wake Forest. Among those are Guy Carswell, Herbert Bridges, and the Dowds. There are also a lot of people who grew up in this church who have gone on and done well and displayed tremendous leadership—Dick Spangler among many others.

In summing up, I can say this is a very unique church, a very strong church.

[Cecelia Dickson Stewart and Dick Dickson first became members of our Myers Park Baptist Church family in 1943 and 1949, respectively.]

Reminiscing on the History of our Church

Lake Dickson

It was a very cold January 17, 1942 when we went to the meeting at Queens College where the organization of a new church was being discussed. We went as a family, taking all four children. At that meeting each of the twelve men who attended donated ten dollars to a fund to start the church.

During those early years after the church began, I do not know what we would have done without Bess Benoit who was responsible for the most delicious food for church dinners. During one of those dinners, someone mentioned that we seemed to eat all the time. Kiser, the Frank Dowd's butler, was serving and, overhearing the remark commented, "Jesus et, didn't he?"

I remember about 1950 when the Sanctuary was being built, the Thanksgiving service was held on the construction site, and everyone attended. Dr. Heaton sat on one of the large pieces of machinery.

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For over forty years now I have helped with decorating the church for special events. The beginning of a "decorating group" was the time that Alice Berman asked those of us in the choir who had made the choir robes to make little bouquets for the graduation ceremony. Alice bought straw hats that we filled with flowers, and that is how we got started. One time we turned the Hut into a circus tent with sawdust on the floor—it even smelled like the circus! We also decorated for dances and for Christmas, using anything to disguise the building and we succeeded. When the President of Westminster Choir College was a guest for a dinner there, he complimented the ladies who had made the tables "prettier than those out there." That was after he told us that our church had taken his best choir director (Alice Berman) and his best organist (Lauretta Short)!

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I believe that each of our ministers has been the right man for his time, and they have all been very broad-minded in an ecumenical sense. When Dr. Marney, for example, gave his televised Christmas Eve sermon, his topic was not on the birth of Jesus, but peace. He said that peace would not come until it comes in the hearts of men.

Dr. Marney could come down to the average person's level of understanding or he could be very intellectual. He believed that "if a minister doesn't stretch you, he's not a good minister." He also emphasized, "It's you, the older generation, who need to learn."

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When the vision of Southminster was being developed several years ago, the Baptist and Episcopal churches were represented partially by Gene Owens and Frank Vest. My sons Alan (from Christ Episcopal) and Stuart (from Myers Park Baptist) also participated. Because I felt that I wanted to do my part, I bought the first house there. When Dr. Heaton stops in Charlotte on business trips now, he comes to see some of the church members who are living at Southminster. On his recent visit in January, a special large table in the dining room was prepared for us.

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On the 19th of January of this year, we had a gathering at church to talk to Dr. Heaton and others about the early days of our church. When it was my turn on the panel to speak about my memories, I found it easier than I had expected because it was such an enjoyable event. Later that morning after church, I was drawn to the Great Hall by family members for a surprise: on the table was a birthday cake for me, and all the church members there helped to celebrate my birthday! I do not remember ever having a more exciting day.

[Lake Dickson has been a member of our Myers Park Baptist Church family since 1943.]

1964: 5:00–8:00 Sunday Evenings, MPBC Parlor

Diannah Ellis

Dr. Marney and his wife, Elizabeth, for three years met with some Charlotte young adults in a small group setting with Butch and Bill Moffitt and Jo Ann and Charlie Britey serving as sponsors of the group. Marney hoped for that time to be a dialogue on personal and faith issues pertinent to the lives and interests of the young people. Trying different ways to stimulate discussions and sharing, we found that the reading of plays served well as a catalyst. Dr. Marney would prod us on by telling stories relating the faith to our questions and lives, with Elizabeth listening and nurturing.

The first play read was *Death of a Salesman*. "Attention, attention must be paid to this man," resonated with us for months. After we completed reading it, Marney asked the group, "What do you want to read next?" One highly educated and ambitious member responded, "I don't know about you, Dr. Marney, but I'd like to read *Hawaii*" (a thick James Michener novel). "Well, son, why don't you read it then?" Marney retorted.

We continued reading—*Job, Zoo Story, Rhinoceros* and others. Most im-

portantly, we were building community and caring for one another at a strategic time in our lives. We had found a way to share on a deeper level and to have great fun. Barbeques, beach trips, events, and visiting were adjuncts to Sunday evenings that enhanced community experience.

The group changed as people married, new members came in, others moved away, Marney and Elizabeth moved to Wolfpin Mountain, and babies were born. However, a nucleus continued for some time: Butch and Bill Moffitt, Sarah Griffin, Joe and Sara Spencer, Adam Wofford, Betty and Raymond Maxwell, Art and Diannah Ellis, Margie Forbes, Bruce McGraw, Nancy Cheek, Bertha....

[Diannah Ellis has been a member of our Myers Park Baptist Church family since 1963.]

I Remember

Jewell Elmore

My husband Dick, Mary Leach (7), Richard (3), and I moved to Charlotte in the summer of 1947. We had not been here long when we were invited to a family night supper at Myers Park Baptist Church. We were standing in line to be served when a lady in front turned, introduced herself and gave us a very warm welcome—I shall always remember Peggy Oliver. We joined in November, 1947.

I remember another family night we paid full price for the meal but were served only dessert. This was a method to raise some money to buy a typewriter for a man who had no hands. He could type with his tongue.

When we moved to the Sanctuary, I worked on the Altar Committee with Lilly Crump. On Saturdays we'd go down to Morehead Street and buy flowers to be arranged in one or two vases for the altar. We could buy enough for about $10.00.

This is a church that I feel I have had a little part in. Whatever contribution I have made has been and is a pleasure as well as a privilege.

[Jewell Elmore has been a member of our Myers Park Baptist Church family since 1947 and served as Church Hostess from 1958-1976.]

Being a Youth in Our Church's Early Days

George Fields

(As told to Whalen Hickey)

I joined Myers Park Baptist Church on the afternoon of January 23, 1944, the last day that one could join and still be considered a charter member.

In the early days of the church, we met at Queens College in classrooms and in the auditorium. The old Efird building (across Selwyn Avenue from Queens College), previously called the Servants' Quarters or the Guest House, was used at the Fellowship building. And I remember a later time when Pop LeNeave, for whom I was then working, cut out trees and replaced the batten boards for the Huts which church members had built near the Fellowship building. We used those Huts for quite a long time.

Dr. Heaton thought that young people and, in fact, the whole congregation should learn the background of the Bible and the sources of the Bible and things that are taught in seminary, and so he had classes for that on Sunday afternoons. He also taught us some of the customs and traditions of other churches. Mrs. Heaton knew a great deal about the Roman Catholic Church and also a lot about the Episcopal Church.

Mrs. Heaton, by the way, was extremely active in the church. She went on retreats up in the mountains with the young people, and when I was in high school and later when my sister was in high school, she had a high-school-age group that she mothered. We all got to know each other real well. (I went off to college in 1946 and came back in 1950, and we still had a good group of some of the same people as well as some new ones.) Mrs. Heaton also had a course in which she tried to teach us all to be "charming." We learned such things as table manners, etiquette and some of the finer things in life that people might otherwise miss.

Sometimes we had square dances in the Huts, and in those days the idea of square dances for Baptist Church groups was pretty far out. We also had hay rides that Dr. Heaton went on with us. In fact there was not a whole lot of staff in those days except for Dr. and Mrs. Heaton and Dr. Heaton's secretary. That was good in a way, but it stretched them out awfully thin; however, when we heard something, we heard it from an awfully good source, the main man.

After we moved into our Sanctuary building, things were not quite the same (the dream is always better than the reality). The camaraderie that we had had before the building was finished was much tighter than it has been since. We knew that we had to make it work before, and then after

we got a big, fine building (in my opinion, the finest one in Charlotte), it was not the same as when we had no building.

[George Fields has been a member of our Myers Park Baptist Church family since 1944.]

Memories of the 1980 Covenant Committee

Carolyn Geer

It seems so long ago—probably the spring of 1978. Someone called and asked me if I would be on the Covenant Committee. He said Dan White would chair the committee which was to write a new covenant for the church. Little did I know when I accepted that invitation that Dan would be leaving for India and I would be asked or delegated (the difference between the two at the time was undefined) to become the chair of that committee.

In the fall of 1978, the committee began working. I made chocolate chip cookies for the meeting and nervously assumed my new role. In that first meeting we read and discussed some of the covenants in the Bible that God had made with his people, then shared some aspects and stories of our faith. We decided we wanted our covenant to reflect the journey of faith of the people of our church.

It was also important to us that our covenant have a classical rather than traditional basis, and what better source outside the Bible than *Pilgrim's Progress*, Bunyan's great chronicle of a journey of faith. Our assignment for the next few meetings was to read and discuss it, thus forming our literary background.

Then it was time to start writing. I was determined that no one person on the committee would have more input than another, so this is how we proceeded: the committee brainstormed ideas for the covenant which were recorded on newsprint and later typed by Scrappy Gardner (our church secretary then); these were mailed to the committee for review and used as the basis of work at our next meeting. On the day of the meeting, I would talk quickly to Gene Owens to pick up reactions on the previous meeting and suggestions for the next.

It took almost six months to sort through all the ideas for the covenant with some good ideas being eliminated along the way for the sake of brevity. The ideas that remained had survived long, thoughtful struggles between strong minds on the committee.

We met for over a year. Dan White returned from India and to the committee, but, in spite of my encouragement, not to the chairmanship.

Once the ideas that were to remain had been selected, the group structured the sentences and put them in their proper sequence. This was no small task either, and it took months. As a group, we did the final editing and had small disagreements about almost every punctuation mark. At that point I sent a copy home with John Freeman for Grace, his wife and one of our local poets-in-residence, to read. She met me in the Great Hall the next Sunday and she said, "Carolyn, it's good and you have finished it. Don't change it and don't let them edit it to death." I thanked her and wondered how I was going to wind down that committee that had worked so vigorously for over a year. No more changes? They had thrived on debate and changes!

The summer of 1980 provided a break that we needed from almost weekly meetings. During the last meeting in the spring, I suggested that in the fall we each take a Sunday School class, and, in that way, take the covenant to the congregation for reactions and input. We did this, and most people were pleased with what they heard.

We still read the Founders' Covenant which is beautiful, but it was not written by people from this congregation. I can testify to the fact that over a period of a couple of years, a cross section of people from the congregation of Myers Park Baptist Church worked thoughtfully and diligently to write the covenant that was first published in November, 1980.

[Carolyn Geer has been a member of our Myers Park Baptist Church family since 1965.]

My Exercise Class

Helen Goans

And no aerobics in the mid-fifties—none needed! After much discussion and pleading, we now had a room we could use—in the lower level of the Sanctuary and near our own Sunday School room. Until that time our education program had operated under the belief that children under two should be home with their mothers on Sunday mornings. Finally, we could test our wings and begin our co-op child care for children under two. We took turns caring for the children and brought our own supplies and toys. How good it was to be able to participate in our adult class once again.

Then two significant events occurred. Because our child care program thrived, we were given the use of the room under the Chapel, and baby beds were obtained. We were able to get a Seventh Day Adventist nurse to keep our nursery, and, eventually, a care giver for our toddlers, too. Then our class was given a new room—across the street, third floor of the

Harris House. Now our exercise program was in full swing. Here we were—parking our car, rushing down to the lower level of the Sanctuary with our child and his belongings, up the stairs, across the streets, and up two flights of stairs to my class. After class we reversed—down two flights of stairs, across the streets, down the steps, claim my child and his belongings and back up the steps. By then several class members were pregnant, but the trek continued.

I was told we became an embarrassment and concern to the founding fathers. We were given a new Sunday School room. This time we would meet in the lower level of the Science Building of Queens College—an interesting journey. Then another new element was added: our two's were meeting in a second floor room of the brick building on the site of our present Selwyn parking lot, a short detour. And so our warm-ups and work-outs continued—our fitness program in those days!

[Helen Goans has been a member of our Myers Park Baptist Church family since 1950.]

Recalling Special Times and People

Sophie Goans

When the Sanctuary was dedicated, I remember that the first hymn that was sung was "The Church's One Foundation." In February before the dedication, I had received one of the cherished birthday cards from Dr. Heaton on which he remarked, "What a great day we are going to have!"

Dr. Heaton and Emily Heaton were both very vital people, with Emily finding a special niche with the very young teenagers. I remember that she herself decorated the Huts for their dances, and she taught the youth the amenities of life.

Emily also taught those of us on the Altar Committee how to iron linens for the sacristy on a board on the floor so that they wouldn't have a crease in them. After several years, a hole wore in one of the linens. We intended to discard it and purchase a new one, but Emily said that good linens were worth mending.

At one time the boy scout troop that the church sponsored was very active. Three of my grandsons became Eagle Scouts while in the troop.

Dr. Marney was great when my son died. One evening he came slouching down to Helen's house in baggy pants and slippers and told my grandson Jim, "I felt like tonight you needed a man to put you to bed." The boys really valued the relationship. He even gave them his personal phone number.

My whole relationship with the church has been a happy one although there have been a few disappointments.

[Sophie Goans has been a member of our Myers Park Baptist Church family since 1943.]

Mary Gravatt's Fond Memories of the Early Times in Myers Park Baptist Church

(As told to Alice Hickey)

I have wonderful memories of that very special and precious time when all of us were young and were raising our families and starting this very special church with its new concepts of how best to serve our people and our needs.

I was a young wife whose husband had just returned home after three years' military service, and our main social entertainment and spiritual life was bound up in the church. We had a circle of nothing but working girls with Elizabeth Dowd seeming to spearhead most of the programs among the young working people. Most of us sang in the church choir, and nearly all of us in our age group were in a couples class. Later, as our children came along, we all took turns working in the nursery. We also helped serve meals in the Hut where we had dinner once a week.

This was a special period in the late 1940s in which I found that the entire church was a close-knit group which knew everyone, cared for everyone and loved everyone.

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Dr. Heaton had a wonderful faculty for remembering every person, including husbands, wives, names of children and to whom they belonged. From a congregation of about 250 members to one a little less than its present size, Dr. Heaton was always able to have this marvelous ability to remember everyone by name.

[Mary Gravatt has been a member of our Myers Park Baptist Church family since 1943.]

Several Missions of our Church

Lalla Gribble

A Home for Beth Shalom

I felt good about the fact that Myers Park Baptist Church and Temple Beth Shalom lived together for some three or four years in the early '70s. Beth Shalom was a small, new Jewish congregation which needed a place to meet. The Property-Maintenance Committee, the Executive Committee, and the Board of Deacons of the church all voted unanimously to share space in our Education Building with this group.

Much was said in the community about the unusual and perhaps unprecedented fact of a Jewish temple and a Baptist church having such a relationship. Undoubtedly, the success of the arrangement was largely because of Dr. Eugene Owens' own personality and theology. He led the church in welcoming the other congregation and in learning much from them, and he developed a close personal friendship with Rabbi Mel Silverman.

One magazine article said, "Beth Shalom and Myers Park have maintained an easy, unexploited relationship, called by some a 'marriage,' by others a 'covenant' and by others either a good or bad thing."

I found a sentence I like in a letter written to Dr. Owens by Walter Klein who was president of Beth Shalom congregation. He said, "Mel has been challenging us each Friday night to find God. Situated as we are in Myers Park Baptist Church, I believe we are getting close."

I Remember Anita

A significant chapter in the story of the missions of our Myers Park Baptist Church concerned the church's involvement with Anita Stroud. Anita was a black woman living in the public housing project called Fairview Homes where many children also lived. Remembering her own homeless and neglected childhood, Anita took those children under her wings. On Tuesday afternoons after school, she had a Bible story hour for them. The children crowded into her small apartment in great numbers—sometimes as many as 209 children in that tiny space.

For twenty-five years she had worked with hundreds of black children when a committee from Myers Park Baptist Church headed by Russell Crump decided to help by buying her a fifty- by ten-foot mobile classroom to put in her back yard. The church voted in favor of the idea and approved the use of funds.

The trailer was bought and constantly used. The Board of Missions and Women of the Church decided the best way we could help was by assisting Anita any way we could. Anita's health was not good, and there was

so much to do. Soon Myers Park Baptist Church Circle members began going on Tuesdays to help. Lucy Harrison, Bertha Wagster and I often went together. Bertha played the piano, and the children lustily sang, "Jesus loves the little children, all the children of the world—red and yellow, black and white; they are precious in his sight. Jesus loves the little children of the world." I would try to tell them a story but had trouble keeping their attention. However, when Anita came in, the children were immediately quiet and perfect angels. When "Miss Neet," as they called her, spoke, they listened, and she told them over and over, "BE SOMEBODY. YOU CAN BE SOMEBODY."

At Christmas Anita beautifully decorated white paper bags with old Christmas cards that our circle members had donated. In each bag she put a present for a child—underwear, socks, fruit—something basic. She also cooked a big Christmas dinner and served it in the trailer for as many as 445 children. In the summers she took some of them on a camping trip. For forty-three years she was a substitute mother for thousands of Charlotte's low-income children.

Anita said, "In that trailer we have talked together, prayed together, cried together, and fought together."

On Sunday, May 20, 1979, Myers Park Baptist Church celebrated her eightieth birthday in the Great Hall. We gave her roses, cards, and a tape recorder and sang, "Happy Birthday, Miss Neet."

In *The Charlotte Observer*, Dr. Eugene Owens was quoted as telling his congregation that "Miss Stroud has allowed us to work with her in the service of humankind. She has enabled us to reach people we otherwise couldn't reach."

Twenty years earlier, in 1961, Anita had been presented the first annual Mecklenburg Service to Mankind Award. Dr. Carlyle Marney said, "If this nation has ever had a revolution from the great mass of poverty-stricken people, it is because of the Anita Strouds."

Anita died on May 14, 1985. I am so grateful that I knew her.

A Performance by Friendship Baptist Church Choir

Another special remembrance was the Sunday the choir of Friendship Baptist Church, a large black congregation, swapped places with the choir of Myers Park Baptist Church. Never had we heard the church building so filled with song—the roof was practically lifted from the building. It was glorious. They made our own singing sound anemic.

I never heard what the congregation of Friendship Baptist Church thought about our choir's singing at their church.

[Lalla Gribble has been a member of our Myers Park Baptist Church family since 1946.]

My Special Mission Projects

Lea Harrison

In 1953 we moved from Roanoke, Virginia, with two small children (Lucy, four, and Stella, two) and King III was born in June, 1953. The next year Jean was born. We visited around to a few churches, and I remember telling my husband when we went to get our daughters after Sunday School at Myers Park Baptist Church, "King, this is a great place for our children and we can learn here also."

When we first became members, I joined a circle and, as a project, we went over to Florence Crittenton Home (a home for unwed mothers) to teach the girls how to make slips or bedroom slippers. When my children got older, I wanted to give lessons as a gift some place, and thinking again about the Florence Crittenton Home, called and offered my sewing lessons one afternoon each week in 1973. I haven't been able to stop. Gene and our church helped me get four new sewing machines, and it was great to teach on something that wasn't always broken.

When I heard and read about boat people who were being brought to our city several years ago, I decided to ask our church if I could teach a group how to sew. In our classroom I did teach a group. They liked it so much, some other members of the family came just to watch. They could not speak English, so it was a show-and-tell kind of project. And later, I heard that some of the women got jobs in stores doing alterations and making some income for their families.

About fifteen years ago Gene asked me to start the patio breakfasts. After making a plan for accomplishing such an undertaking, I asked my Sunday School Class (Fifth Dimension, of which I was president for six years) to help. Later, other classes helped, and now the task is shared by many classes.

Being a long-time member of the Altar Committee has been especially significant to me as well as being a deacon.

Never for a moment have I regretted our decision to join this beautiful, meaningful place to worship God, from which I could take a message out into the world each week. In addition to the church's having been an important place in my life's journey, our church community was a wonderful help with my family. I give special thanks to Gene Owens and to all the other members of our church community for blessings I have received from them.

[Lea Harrison has been a member of our Myers Park Baptist Church family since 1953.]

Love One Another

Lucy Harrison

We teachers know everything, don't we?

I didn't realize how LITTLE I knew until I started teaching at the Through-the-Week School at Myers Park Baptist Church.

The school opened in September, 1955. The three teachers were Jewell Elmore, Maurine Dobson, and me. One of our first major decisions was the allocation of time on the relatively small playground. That settled, the "fives" would burst from their room as soon as the "fours" returned to theirs. The only deviation from this schedule was when one group was on a field trip.

In 1962 our church provided rooms for the United Cerebral Palsy Center. THEIR time on the playground was especially sacred, NEVER to be infringed upon, we said.

But one day it happened! A mix-up of some kind and the "fours" and the U.C.P. children were on the playground at the same time! As both sets of teachers offered profuse apologies to each other and were trying to decide what to do, the children settled it! They PLAYED together.

After that wonderful experience, ALL of the classes wanted to be on the playground with the U.C.P. children.

The next logical step was to integrate the class. Tom was the first. I tried to learn all I could about his physical disability—WHEN to offer help and when NOT to. He was a very quiet five-year-old, capable of doing everything except walk without his crutches. He seemed amused when the others borrowed his crutches and clumsily tried to walk with them.

The church continued to add more fine equipment to the playground. But the children still loved the old "flat tires" which my husband had found for us in the early days. Tom's activities on the playground were limited to the swings, the sandbox and being pulled or pushed—fast!—in a wagon. I thought he was content.

But one eventful day a little girl ran up to me, worry saddening her little-girl-mother face. "Tom is going up the steps of the slide!" she said. I rushed over. Tom was part way up!

At each step he had to release the tension on the hinge at the knee of the leg brace, lift that leg to the step above and re-tighten the hinge. Alternate legs, release and tighten, step by step. The line behind him waited patiently.

My heart was in my throat. His inexperience and the weight of his braces would surely hurtle him down the slide and off at the bottom. But the First Commandment for a teacher is, "Thou shalt not EVER tell a child that he is incapable of doing something."

So I bravely said, "Tom, the first time we go down the slide, we hold onto both sides so we can control how fast we are going...." He didn't

look at me. Loosen the hinge, up a step, tighten the hinge. Again and again.

I moved to the bottom of the slide. SOMEHOW I would break his fall. The little-girl-mother stood behind me with his crutches.

Then, two boys ran by, paused to survey the problem, and thought of a solution: "THE TIRES!" They quickly rolled the tires to the danger zone, piled two of them level with the end of the slide and placed the others beyond—like a landing strip. And, with big smiles, they looked up and called, "Come on, Tom!" And he did, landing safely amid tires and cheers.

A year after that, I re-TIRED. Thank you, parents of the 250 children I taught during those ten years, for sharing your most prized possessions with me.

I learned SO much from them.

[Lucy Harrison has been a member of our Myers Park Baptist Church family since 1952.]

A Different Path

Fred Helms

When the church was being organized, there were two things that the founders had uppermost in mind: first, to have a church which would meet the needs of the children so that they would want to remain in church, and second, to establish a church where the church would be an adjunct to the home in the teaching of religion.

Dr. Heaton, our first minister, was a very resourceful person. Among many other qualities, he had the ability to create a comfortable, enjoyable climate for the discussion of issues that could have been explosive or divisive.

One issue that came before the Board of Deacons during my term as chairman in the late 1940s was "dancing." A request for permission to hold dances for our youth on the church campus was presented. To the surprise of many, both the majority of the board and I supported the request, and, after much discussion, it was approved. When the first dance was held in our Fellowship House, Emily Heaton and I led the figures. Near the end of the evening, Jamie Bryant (a member of the Board of Deacons) said to his wife, Lillian, "Let's go home. I've seen everything now—dancing on a Baptist Church campus with the Chairman of the Board of Deacons and the pastor's wife leading the figures!"

Because we were willing to be innovative and go outside the beaten path of our Southern Baptist brethren, we sometimes became the talk of the other Southern Baptist churches, especially the ones within the state. Dr. Heaton used to say that although our worship services were being

televised, the church was known far more widely for its activities than for its minister.

Our church has run up against some tough situations from time to time, but we have never dodged them if they related to our families or our institution.

[Fred Helms was one of our church founders and has been a member of our Myers Park Baptist Church family since 1943.]

Myers Park Baptist Church Memories

Robin and Julia Hicks

The Missing Choir

The congregation had gathered en masse in the new Education Building which was to be dedicated this night. The Great Hall was packed, and Jim Berry had the choir robed and rehearsing in the Rehearsal Hall below the Sanctuary. The choir was to lead off the celebration in grand style, and the risers were on the stage behind the drawn curtains. Jim left us in the Rehearsal Hall and went over to the "Taj Marney" (Great Hall) to make final preparations and to introduce the choir. He had advised us to go through the underground passage connecting the Sanctuary to the Education Building and position ourselves as instructed on the risers. We got out of the Rehearsal Hall all right and into the tunnel and then found ourselves in the lower level of the Education Building. At that point, things sort of fell apart. We proceeded in more or less single file to wander around downstairs, looking for "the way up."

In the Great Hall Mr. Berry gave the grand introduction and drew back the curtains, but there was no choir to be seen. (The audience probably thought this was the most interesting part of our performance.) The draperies were quickly drawn, and Jim hastened downstairs to find the choir—more or less convulsed with laughter mixed with hysteria—and lead us upstairs to our appropriate positions for the performance. From then on things went relatively well even though there had been considerable difficulty getting us settled down and ready to sing once we got onto the risers.

Fortunately, this inauspicious beginning did not portend the norm for future events in the Great Hall.

A Visitor's Query Gets a Reply

Not too many years after Dr. Owens came to Myers Park Baptist Church, he was at his usual station following the service on Sunday, speaking to the congregants as they left by way of the front entrance when one person

sort of hung back, waiting to speak with him. He introduced himself, and apparently having significant interest in examining the possibility of joining the church, began asking how things were done at our church and what some of the policies were. Ultimately, there came the question about consumption of strong drink. He asked Gene in very plain terms, "And what is the Myers Park Baptist Church policy regarding drinking?" Gene came back with a very prompt and appropriate answer, "Well, it's not required."

A Choir Tour of the Soviet Union

The year was 1974 and the Cold War was in full swing. Jim Berry and the choir director of the First Baptist Church in Shelby had responded to a State Department request that a group of young singers be organized for a trip to the Soviet Union. As a result, one hundred forty-four high school and college freshmen singers were recruited from Shelby, Charlotte, and nearby areas. In addition, four adult couples volunteered to accompany the group. (I was to serve as the group's doctor.)

After the usual fund-raising and intensive rehearsals, we left, flying to New York, then overnight to England. To our surprise there was no one there to greet us upon landing. After several telephone calls and much waiting, however, someone appropriate came to welcome us and transport us to our "hotel."

The accommodations were less than adequate, but we survived and stayed in London for three or four days. Arrangements were to have been made for us to give concerts at various places, but no such arrangements had been made. After hurried telephone calls and contacts, the choir sang in parks and railway stations and on street corners.

We did get to see a play the night after we got to London, but most of the young people went to sleep watching it. It was an Agatha Christie play where, at the crucial moment, everything got very quiet, the lights went out, and there was suddenly a scream. With the scream, some of the young people jumped up and nearly fell out of the steep balcony where they had been seated.

There was also the incident where Mr. Berry had his wallet stolen very neatly as he stepped on the underground. Remarkably, his wallet was found later by the police—minus, of course, all the credit cards and money.

After completing our stay in London, we went to Heathrow Airport where we went through customs and immigration. Of course, after passing through the gate, you can't get back, and we all got past the gate only to learn that our flight had been delayed (and there was no place to sit and wait)! The flight which was to have left at 10:45 at night finally left about 7:00 the next morning. In the interim everyone tried to get what sleep they could while lying on the floor—which was, essentially, none.

We flew from London to Helsinki where we stopped for a few hours and were provided with a quick tour around the city. By the time we got

to Leningrad, it had been about seventy-two hours since those folks had had any real sleep. Our guide took us to the Leningradski Hotel, which was supposed to be the newest and finest hotel in Leningrad. After going through the rigorous rush in customs to get there, the officials proceeded to essentially unpack every bag that went through and literally scared those young people to death. At the hotel all of the young people were required to stay individually in rooms rather than sharing rooms, a situation which did not help their confidence and comfort level. As a result, they would sneak out at night, carrying their blankets and pillows, and go into each others' rooms so they would be with somebody.

Our stay in Leningrad was somewhat like the stay in London—no arrangements had been made for concerts and makeshift arrangements had to be made, but, again, we survived (primarily on ice cream and bread). We did get to see some beautiful historical sights, always under the very close "watch care" of our tour guide who was employed by the Russian government.

We then flew to Moscow where we stayed for another three or four days and where the highlight of our trip occurred. Even though we were allowed to go to the First Baptist Church of Moscow, the bus would not take us to the front door. The driver was required to let the crowd off two blocks away, and we had to walk from there to the church. The church was absolutely jammed-packed. It was August, and there was no air-conditioning. The touring choir was placed around the balcony, and all of the church congregation was on the main floor. We, of course, did not understand anything that they were saying, and they did not understand anything we were saying, but there was tremendous communication through music, and it was a most touching scene.

One of our young people who had fainted from the heat was taken down to the church office and placed on a leather sofa where it was a little cooler, and I went down to see about her. While I was there, I noticed people going back and forth out of the office into a little room and became aware that what they were doing was coming in, unlocking a safe and taking out Bibles (which were illegal at the time in Russia).

The service was completed with the Russian congregation waving handkerchiefs and singing in typical Slavic minor key, "We Shall Overcome." We did not understand the words, but we certainly understood the music, and it really gave us chills. As we left the church, the people in the congregation who had left ahead of us formed an aisle down the street, and, as our young people walked down the aisle, the Russian folks would run out and grab them and kiss them. There were many tears shed.

We were taken to the airport where, in the middle of the afternoon, our loaded plane stopped and turned off its engines. Again, there was no air-conditioning. The plane was crowded with people standing, holding onto the luggage racks—and we just sat there for about forty-five minutes with the sun baking down on the plane. I thought for sure they were trying to kill us. (After I got home, I took out my thermometer, and it had registered one hundred ten degrees.)

The plane finally took off, and we went from there to Paris, where (wouldn't you know it?) they housed us in a very colorful facility where the only utility in every room was a bidet. The young people used them to keep their Coke-a-Colas cool. We had to station some of our young men in the hallways to keep the French men from breaking into the rooms to try to reach the girls. I really think this might have been what was referred to as a house of ill-repute. There was one bathroom on each floor, and we couldn't get water in our tub without paying for it. Paris, however, was a delight after having been in Russia.

About ten days after we had first arrived in London, we left Paris for the trip home. When they finally saw the Statue of Liberty, that group of one hundred forty-four youngsters literally lost control. Without any urging from anybody, they broke into all kinds of patriotic songs—an expression of real joy that one would never have expected from teenagers in 1974. I think that if we had a reunion of this group now, we would find that this trip probably made an indelible mark on most of those young folks.

[Robin and Julia Hicks have been members of our Myers Park Baptist Church family since 1961.]

The Case of the Paralyzed Deacon

Tom Holmes

One Sunday in the early '80s I had the deacon responsibility to help in worship by receiving the offering. I had been assigned "one, right," which meant that I was the deacon who led the processional with the plates at the end of the presentation of offerings and that I sat on the side that would eventually take up offerings from the front of the church and meet in the middle in the main aisle on the lectern side the person who is assigned to taking up the offering from the rear of the church .

Now this job is not really difficult. All you have to do is take your plate, pass it down a pew, move up a notch, pass it down that pew and continue doing this until it is time to proceed as a group back up to the chancel. But, let me tell you how I managed to screw it up anyway.

What was different about that Sunday was that Jim Berry, our Minister of Music, had decided to videotape that worship service for the church archives. That was to be one of our magnificent worship services in all its pageantry and music captured on videotape. The video camera was set up in the balcony and was panning the whole area of the congregation, and lo and behold, I was to be the deacon who would be coming up the main aisle on that Sunday. The more I thought about how important that was in terms of doing my job well, the more nervous I became and the

more I knew I was to have no faltering. I was determined that I was not going to do anything that was not going to contribute to making that worship service the best that we knew how to make it because I knew that Jim had worked really hard to make it memorable.

So, as was our habit, during the prayers the deacons at the ends of the aisles passed out the silver collection plates to the deacons who were seated there, and at the completion of the prayers, we all stood up and filed out to take our stations and begin accepting the offering. Well, I was a little nervous. Because I had on my best, had my top button done up and tie tucked in, I knew I was doing okay. I checked out of the corner of my eye to see that my deacon partner in the side aisle was keeping up with me, then stepped up one pew and offered the plate to the first person. That person happened to be Theresa Argo, who, as people do, indicated to me that she had nothing to contribute to the plate that week by giving me a hand-sign that indicated to me that she was saying, "No, don't stop," as she mouthed the word "No" to me. Well, that is the message that Theresa sent, but that is not what I received! Because my mind was racing with the show business implications of what I was doing, I interpreted Theresa's motion as meaning, "No, its not time to start yet because Jim hasn't started singing, and we're waiting for the crescendo to start before we're supposed to take the offering." See, she was facing front and I had my back to what Jim was doing, so I assumed that somehow she knew that it was improper to start. After all, she was a deacon and knew those things, so I ought to accept her signal to me and wait to start when the music started. So I waited. When the music began, I offered the plate to her again, and again she gave me the same signal (shook the hand, Nothing to offer; said, "No," and shook her head)! So I stood there some more, holding the plate, looking to the rear, wondering when it was going to be time to start—I had stagefright, completely paralyzed in place.

I think I must have stood there a least a full minute (I have no idea how long, really, but it seemed forever)—it was very stupid looking! It was not until I finally began to realize that the deacons who were working from the back of the Sanctuary (and who had started on time) were going to come all the way up to the front if I did not get going that I decided it was time to move on to the next pew.

Another thing that was funny about that whole business was that my deacon partner in the side aisle kept looking anxiously over at me and, seeing that I was still not moving, assumed that I knew what I was doing and, therefore, did not move either. So we were both standing there in front of the church when we were supposed to be doing such a wonderful job.

What was particularly interesting was that although I was extremely embarrassed and, while we were waiting in the narthex, a couple of deacons did ask what the problem had been "back there," nobody ragged me about it, nobody teased me about it, and, in fact, nobody even mentioned that I had done something extremely strange in the midst of what I

considered to be my big chance at stardom, which I had totally blown.

So that is the story of the paralyzed deacon.

[Tom Holmes has been a member of our Myers Park Baptist Church family since 1973.]

And What Was Theresa Thinking?

Theresa Argo

I suppose those of you who were in that particular service, for which much preparation and attention to detail had been accomplished for the taping, may still be wondering what was going on in my mind during that long, awkward pause in what was meant to be a routine, though really quite special, weekly offering collection. Just as Tom Holmes describes in his account of that traumatic moment in his life, this also was a frustrating moment for me as well. As Tom was standing there so handsomely, like a soldier at attention, I kept wondering what else he expected of me, not realizing that Tom evidently was unaware that my gesture was one that is commonly used and understood in our congregation.

Tom and I have, since that seemingly endless pause of one or two minutes, been able to talk about it and even enjoy a good laugh about it together. And now I have a message for Tom:

You are a dear man and I love you more, especially, for our having had our nerve-wracking encounter.

[Theresa Argo has been a member of our Myers Park Baptist Church family since 1943.]

A Travelogue

Charles (Chuck) C. Iliff

When asked to write about my experiences at Myers Park Baptist Church over the past ten years, I really did not think that I had anything to contribute to the history of the church. However, upon reflection, I have come to realize that my life has been profoundly affected by my time here.

In the fall of 1981, I heard about an opening for Church Administrator at Myers Park Baptist Church. At the time I was serving in the same capacity in a Methodist Church in Irmo, South Carolina. I applied and was accepted by Myers Park Baptist Church. Some friends and fellow administrators in the Carolinas had warned me about this church, so I did not really know what I was getting into. I did not realize or ever imagine the uniqueness of this church until I came to serve on the staff.

My first surprise was that the theological perspective was very compatible with my own Methodist upbringing and beliefs. I did not have to be "re-educated" as Gene Owens put it. Another pleasant surprise was the warm welcome and cooperation from all the staff members, both ministerial and lay, which continued from day one to my day of retirement. After that beginning everything seemed to just get better and better. Barbara and I joined the church in May, 1982, and began to become assimilated into the life of the church. Of course, my duties kept me busy. I learned that Myers Park Baptist Church was a church that studied everything to death and then restudied it, but that had merit because decisions were not made in haste. I learned early that I was not to call any meeting during the ACC Basketball Tournament.

One of my first projects was to present a proposal with costs and benefits for computerizing the church records. I had great support in this, and it became a major project to adopt and put into action. One amusing part concerned the entering of members' birth dates. It had long been the custom of Myers Park Baptist Church to record for the adults only the month and day, not the year. I spoke to several adult Sunday School classes about the need for accuracy in our information. When they learned that if the year was not entered, the computer would assume that they were born in 1990 and so print it that way, it was amazing how many revised their dates to give us their year of birth.

I learned over the years that this church has a closeness and loving attitude toward one another. It took me a while to understand the statement that said, "We encourage diversity, but it must not be divisive." I believe this is a key to the success of this great church, and I hope it never changes. I recall many meetings where it seemed that there would be no way to reach a decision, yet this principle applied, and every member strove harder to reach a consensus.

I recall our ministerial staff retreats with much joy and have many fond memories of all the staff. I owe them much individually and collectively for making my tasks easier than they might have been.

I remember the first time I saw Carey Dowd processing with the choir in their red and white robes, and my first thought was, "They have a built-in Santa Claus." I remember the first time I met Emil (Jim) Kratt. He was at one end of the Great Hall, and I was at the other. He came over to me and introduced himself with these words, "I just had to meet the man who had feet as big as mine." I remember Dick Sutton and Dale Mullennix showing me around the facilities when I first came and doing their best to get me lost and confused.

Then there has been the final dimension—becoming involved in a Sunday School class. I was asked to join and teach the Chesney Men's Class which I did whenever I could. The fellowship helped me feel more than a staff member. Then the Fidelis Class asked me to be their regular Sunday School teacher. These have been tremendous years and have been so rewarding and challenging.

There is no way that I can express my feelings about the church—it has come a long way in the first fifty years and I pray that it will do as well in the next fifty. Myers Park Baptist Church has a unique place in the life of Charlotte and will continue to lead in so many ways. Thank you for letting me be a part of it, even if but for a short time.

[Chuck Iliff has been a member of our Myers Park Baptist Church family since 1982 and served as our Church Administrator from 1982 to 1986.]

Remembering My Altar Committee Participation

Gensie Johnston

The most enjoyable work I have done at Myers Park Baptist has been with the Altar Committee.

In the beginning, Committee members arranged most of the altar flowers using the two beautiful brass vases. Mrs. Reece Broward, National certified flower judge, was hired to teach us the fine art of arranging for churches. She drew the plans for our Christmas decorations for the church doors. The same plans are used today. One thing Mrs. Broward told us was when the frames were finished with magnolia and fir, we should have them secured to our doors, then add magnolia leaves to the bottoms so that they would not look like a small boy with pants too short. One of the church custodians would drive the church truck and pick magnolia leaves on Lex Marsh's property which is known today as Strawberry Hill. Committee members grew or collected nandina berries for the center wreath. That busy day, the first of December, was a fun time of fellowship, coffee, and cookies. Unless you've worked on the committee, you do not appreciate the many important rules for church flower arranging. Blues recede, so if used, it appears that there are holes in the arrangements. We learned to always go to the back of the sanctuary to view the flowers. Massive flowers, such as hydrangeas, can be seen from the back.

I remember the time I decorated the altar with brilliant fall leaves. Jim Berry came in (he was always there on Saturdays). He agreed with me that the altar flowers had never been more beautiful. When I went to check the altar on Sunday at nine o'clock, the leaves had withered. It took some quick doing to collect more leaves before the eleven o'clock service.

In addition to the hours of pleasure derived from working with flowers in the quiet of our beautiful Sanctuary, friendships were formed which remain strong to this day.

[Gensie Johnston has been a member of our Myers Park Baptist Church family since 1949.]

Looking Back

Hunter Jones

When I was Chairman of the Board of Deacons, we wanted to pay off the debt on the Education/Administration Building. I went to see Dr. Marney and told him that we wanted to have a campaign to raise money to do this. He replied, "I've never participated in a campaign like this and don't know whether we should do it or not." Finally, he agreed, and we went ahead with the campaign. Later, we had a second one and were able to pay off the debt.

I was on the Endowment Committee for quite a while and was chairman also. We raised a good deal of money.

Some of the church founders whom I remember particularly were Rush Dickson, Marvin Scruggs, Herbert Bridges, Guy Carswell, Jamie Bryant, and Lex Marsh. There were others also.

[Hunter Jones has been a member of our Myers Park Baptist Church family since 1946.]

Myers Park Baptist Church in Retrospect

Jeffrey O. Kelley

I remember with delight and affection my days as one of the Associate Pastors at Myers Park Baptist Church in the early '70s. Then, as now, faith was forever being held up for reflective conversation among disciples and those who longed to be. Faith thinking mattered. It is, I believe, the distinctive benchmark of the congregation formed at Selwyn and Queens Road. In my days there, reasoned faith confronted cultural exclusiveness wrapped in the dogmas of Southern fundamentalism. The battle has not ended apparently; it arises with each new generation.

My own spiritual and geographical journey has been long and circuitous. At this time I serve as the pastor of a suburban United Methodist Church in central Illinois. The struggle presently is with an over-indulged immersion of emotion substituting for faith. Reasoned faith in touch with feeling but not enslaved to the self is still rare. But then so is Myers Park Baptist Church. I wonder where the struggle is for you nowadays. But I know wherever it is, it will be punctuated by humor.

I remember one Sunday especially in May, 1972. Gene had preached (in his estimation) not well. It was his custom to beat the crowd to the exit and exchange greetings with them on their way out of the narthex onto the lawn. However, this Sunday as I sat from the vantage point behind

the lectern, I watched Gene as he walked to the rear of the Sanctuary. He did not stop. He continued through the great doors down Malvern Avenue all the way home with his wonderful maroon robe billowing in the breeze!

It was John Wesley, I believe, who turned to his brother Charles and said to him as they departed from their failed mission to Georgia, "Our preaching was so bad it's a wonder they didn't stone us." Gene, on that Sunday in May, you didn't give us the chance. But on Sunday after Sunday and year after year you did trouble us with your preaching. You preached as you were and as you hoped, in Christ, to be. You were congruent. Thanks, dear friend.

[Jeffrey Kelley was a member of our Myers Park Baptist Church family from 1971 to 1973 and served as an Associate Minister.]

Reflections

Peggy Kelly

There are so many things to look back upon over the last fifty years of my experiences in connection with Myers Park Baptist Church. My sister and I joined the church when we were in our teens. My first Sunday School class at our church met in one of the classrooms at Queens College, and our teacher was Pop LeNeave, a super teacher and, in the eyes of the twelve- and thirteen-year-old girls, very handsome with his blonde curly hair.

There were many things going on for the youth of the church. The first girls' choir met at Queens College and sang for the church service occasionally. I remember one Sunday I was late, as usual, and as I walked up the walkway, the choir started singing. After all those weeks of practice, I had to sit in the congregation and listen to the choir. I do not remember what Mrs. Berman said, but I am sure she had something to say.

The church gave dances for the college students when they were home on vacation. Formal dances were sometimes held on the top floor of the Education Building. One day while I was riding the Selwyn bus downtown to meet some friends for lunch, the ladies behind me began discussing Myers Park Baptist Church. I became very interested, especially when one lady said, "Do you know that those people at Myers Park Baptist Church have dances? They are going to dance themselves right straight to hell!"

Family Night was held every week. After dinner the seniors in high school had a discussion group with different people talking to them about college in order to help them prepare for the next college year. One night a young man talked to us about fashions for the next year. He was working at Ivey's in Charlotte for a time before going to Ivey's in Florida.

Girl's were wearing big sweaters and short skirts with socks at the time. He told us that the next year all the girls would be wearing long skirts. We laughed and did not believe him. The very next year long skirts were in and short skirts were OUT!

I worked at the church in the next few years. The church office was in the Efird house. Lunches were catered by Jessie and held in the living room. One day she served fried chicken at a luncheon where either the finance committee or deacons were meeting. All of the secretaries agreed to eat the fried chicken with their fingers. When lunch was served, I picked up my chicken and no one else did. I enjoyed my lunch anyway.

One of my recollections is of the time when young Jim Berry came to sing the bass soloist part in *The Messiah* that the choir performed.

Later on, when my daughter, Margaret Hobbs Swicegood, was twelve and was preparing to join the church, Dr. Marney talked to each young person as was his practice. When it was Margaret's turn, he asked, "Margaret, why do you want to join the church? She answered, "To save my soul." He later told me, "There was nothing else for me to say."

[Peggy Kelly has been a member of our Myers Park Baptist Church family since 1943.]

Gratitude Expressed

Jean Herran King

As a new member in 1964, I had a one-to-one talk with Dr. Marney. The following are excerpts of my thoughts at that time which were published in the "Church News."

> As you drive down Queens Road, you know this is a good world to live in. You come to a fork in the road, and there stands a church reaching to the sky. There is an air of spaciousness, grandeur and yet simplicity and divinity. A person's mind, body and soul might mend if only he could spend time there. God is close. You feel you can find great things here—great work to do.
>
> Members are free and easy in conversations—sociable. No unusual idea is down-graded; the variety of opinions is vast but the togetherness of listening to each other in love is fascinating. Many who never spoke gain courage. Some who speak too much gain insight—all become more unselfish. The mind is free to grow and develop in this openness.
>
> The worship experience is the crowning glory. God's nearness and presence is felt. We love this church. To come is to be refreshed.

✠ ✠ ✠

I love my church. It has helped me in many ways:

- Parenting—PET (Parent Effectiveness Training);
- Couple Enrichment—Marriage Enrichment Weekend with Dick and Ilga Sutton;
- Grief counseling—The Women of the Church and "To Life" organization upstairs with Howard Winnaker and Alexis Stein;
- Joy—Concerts, suppers, dinners and dancing in the Great Hall;
- Worship—I love the worship experience;
- Friendships—Song from Randy Mishoe: "Friends are so important. You are my friend. May love walk beside us til we meet again";
- Best friends—Like Jean Menzies, Holly Triplett, Bettie Houser, Carole Outwater—I treasure them;
- Meetings—Although they aren't my style, I tolerate them and sometimes find myself enjoying them;
- Sunday School—The close teaching relationship we had encouraged by inclusion which we always did thoroughly and managed to have near perfect attendance at planning sessions;
- Marriage—My friends and family helped me celebrate my marriage to Harley King performed by Gene Owens;
- Mission—Feel good about helping with problems in my own family, Habitat for Humanity house, opportunities to give food, Crisis Assistance, circles, etc.

[Jean Herran King has been a member of our Myers Park Baptist Church family since 1963.]

In Review of Memorable Times and People

Emil F. (Jim) Kratt

I have memories of Myers Park Baptist Church since 1945 that include the following:

- the Fellowship House (where we ate, had Sunday School, went to meetings, sought out the church secretary or Dr. Heaton and knew it was as much of "your place" as home);
- taking piano lessons from Miss Bombara (now Lauretta Short) and suffering through my worst childhood terror (and I'm certain, Miss Bombara's), my recital;
- building the first Hut, where we thereafter had church suppers (with Dr. Heaton's skill at "calling out" and "raising up" each member); Boy Scouts with Grant Whitney, Pop LeNeave, Herb Copeland, etc.;

- building the second Hut, where we thereafter moved the choirs and "little kids" Sunday School;
- Sunday School in Queens College classrooms and church in their auditorium;
- the empty swimming pool "among the ruins" (where the sanctuary now sits);
- moving church to Belk Chapel and then to the dedication of our own new Sanctuary;
- Vacation Bible School, singing soprano in the Boys' Choir (with high starched collars) and then tenor under the disciplined but loving eyes of Alice Berman;
- a constant rotation of interns, Associate Pastors, and youth leaders (Frank and Sally Dowd were our Senior Sponsors), each of whom made a difference;
- Sunday School taught by Dr. Heaton under the watchful eyes of Emily from the back row;
- Sunday School tests and a GPA for advancement;
- lessons on how to waltz, bow, and other social graces (largely lost), including lectures on sex education (late 1940s);
- a true sense of community and belonging for me, a child who had moved thirteen times since birth;
- graduation and a feeling of estrangement for the next eight years while in college;
- acknowledging my debt to the many members who acted as supportive, extended family with more patience than a saint should be called upon to bear (Guy Carswell had put me in his car and had taken me to Wake Forest and enrolled me);
- a returning and introduction of my Presbyterian wife and son to what, for them, was a new and strange institution (Marney said he had converted Elizabeth from Presbyterianism, and I was not to worry);
- being reaccepted as an adult and entrusted with opportunities of responsibility along with the grace to fail;
- experiencing the sharp pain of disagreement with those whom I loved and respected;
- acknowledging that many of my heroes were right here;
- giving our three children a sense of community and support that they will carry with them wherever they go;
- providing sustenance to Mary and me as we had and raised our family and learned about ourselves and one another;
- allowed me the opportunity to know Gene Owens and a host of others, equally important;
- taught me that real hope lies in the reality of life with all its contradictions;
- finally acknowledging that, intellectually and emotionally, this was

my home and these people were my community, for whom I am exceedingly grateful.

[Jim Kratt has been a member of our Myers Park Baptist Church family since 1946.]

Our Sunday School and Weekday School

Mary Loring

Shortly after the Loring family moved to Hanson Drive, Lucy Kratt invited us to go with her family to the Myers Park Baptist Church. From then on the church was a growing part of our lives.

When Harold and I joined a Couples' Sunday School class early in the '50s, it was a new experience for us both—one that proved inspiring as well as educational and entertaining. We met in the Science Building on the Queens College campus on Sunday mornings and in the Harris House for our parties. Taking turns preparing and serving the food made for a lot of good fellowship! On Sunday mornings, thanks to Dr. Heaton's guidance, we studied child development, concentrating on understanding pre-teens and young teens, often with Queens College professors lecturing to us—all of which proved very valuable to us.

Then our church started a weekday school under the able direction of Bud Wilmot, an excellent director who provided the staff with opportunities to study and grow. When the time came to enroll kindergarteners, Dr. Heaton issued the call to parents in a letter. Instead of saying "kindergarten," however, he said, "If you want your child enrolled in 'nursery' school, please contact our office." So many people responded that the church decided to start a class for three-year-olds with Veegie Short and me being hired as teachers. Later, with increased enrollment, Betty Edens was added to our staff. For several years we worked with Queens Fall School of Religion which gave many people the opportunity to observe our classes in operation.

Being a nursery school teacher was a very rewarding way of life, and I am grateful to the Myers Park Baptist Church for the many opportunities it afforded me.

[Mary Loring has been a member of our Myers Park Baptist Church family since 1949.]

The Time the Bread Got Forgot

Jane Lucas

It was about 12:30 one Saturday night. Ted and I were driving home from a dinner party, crossing a quiet intersection, when it hit me. With my scream of "OH, NO!!!" Ted hit the brakes, looking around for the eighteen-wheeler that must be bearing down on us from somewhere.

A dreaded thought had come to pass.

"I forgot the bread!"

"Forgot the what?" Ted said, still reeling from our narrow escape.

"The communion bread for tomorrow—it's still at the bakery!" We raced to the Federal Bakery at Park Road Shopping Center. Surely someone was still there waiting for us—I mean, this was important!

There on the counter sat the beautiful loaf of Myers Park Baptist Church communion bread—all braided, baked, and ready for Sunday. Break that glass door and just go get it! It was a big temptation! The only number on the door was a security company in Rock Hill, and somehow our emergency paled a little at the thought of calling South Carolina.

What to do? Ted slept soundly that night, but I never closed my eyes. Do I know anybody who just might happen to have any of those little fish-food wafers around the house? How long does it take to cube tiny squares of white bread? Do any friends have loaves of home-made bread in their freezer? And who can I call at 5:00 a.m. on a Sunday, anyway? (This was in the olden days before all-night grocery stores.)

I stood it as long as I could. Gene Owens answered my pre-dawn wake-up call. "Gene, you and Lord have got to get me through something today—I forgot the (expletive deleted) communion bread!" His calm reassurance settled me down, and we decided to go for uncut loaves of French bread, whatever size and shape.

At dawn Ted and I started the Great Bread Hunt. Mary Pinson had a loaf, and Gensie Johnston had two small ones she had just baked. A couple of non-Baptist friends were pretty well stocked and glad to oblige. Ted set out at 7:00 a.m. to canvass the Seven-Elevens and found some French rolls that would do.

We gathered it all together for a communion service that I'll never forget. Gene said something wonderful about our communion bread that day being like our congregation, different and diverse, but gathered together as one.

Thank you, God, for friends who help, for a church community that accepts and loves, for a husband who supports, and for a minister who, while breaking bread, can give a wink of absolution to a relieved parishioner in the third row.

[Jane Lucas has been a member of our Myers Park Baptist Church family since 1961.]

What My Church Has Meant to Me

Connie Maccubbin
(As Told to Alice Hickey)

I was eleven years old and my sister, Betty McKee, was nine when we joined the church just before the deadline for being charter members. My family, including my parents, my sister and my younger brothers, habitually sat together in the fifth row back from the front.

I was fortunate to have Dr. and Mrs. Heaton (he as teacher and she as sponsor) through junior and senior high school. I have many wonderful memories of retreats and special friendships.

I just want to say how much this church has meant to me. Most of the important things in my life have happened with the church involved. In 1953 I got married in the church to Bob Maccubbin. Then my daddy died in 1956 when he was only 48. Bob and I had been away in the service since 1953, and in 1956 we were living in Jacksonville, Florida. On the Sunday that my daddy died, Dr. Heaton was the one who called long distance to inform me of my daddy's death. Bob and I came back for the funeral.

My mother's shock and grief at the suddenness of my father's death left such a lasting imprint on her that she was never again able to try to come back to be a part of the church even though her Fellowship Class was a great support for her for the rest of her life. During that time we realized what church really means when you are absolutely devastated: to have people there to take care of everything you can't take care of.

We have all been so impressed with our three ministers, each of whom has been the right person for the period of his service.

At this time of celebration, as we take time to reflect upon the past fifty years, I feel fortunate to have seen the church change its meeting places (from huts to this beautiful Sanctuary), to have had three outstanding preachers and a music program that is so inspirational and such an integral part of our worship service.

[Connie Maccubbin has been a member of our Myers Park Baptist Church family since 1944.]

Reflections

Alice Patterson MacKay

I recently stood before a room full of top managers and described for them the foundational purpose of my actions and decisions. While it was merely an exercise in personal power and influencing, I was struck by how naturally the "god words" expressed those core forces for me. Why?

Indeed, why not; I've spent over forty years being shaped by the people and events at Myers Park Baptist Church.

I recall the congenial family night dinners of my childhood in those crowded little huts. I can still see and hear Dr. Heaton in the pulpit, his voice like music, and feel his hearty "Glad to see ya" handshake after church. (My mother and I always sat with my grandmother who ALWAYS chose the last pew on the right so her big hats would not block the view of others. This explains why now I ALWAYS sit down front on the left!)

I have a multitude of memories from my years as a youth. It's no wonder; I was here every time they opened the doors! We had Sunday School in the big white house and choir practice with that nice, new minister of music, Mr. Berry. Sunday evening fellowship and those great retreats were times of exploring and testing faith concepts, always in the company of caring adults who knew when to take us seriously. Dr. Marney hung out with us often since his daughters were in the group, and we could tell him the most outrageous things as he calmly puffed on his pipe. His ability to use language both fundamentally simple and exquisitely soaring impressed even us hard-to-impress teens.

One summer six of us teens went to the American Baptist Conference Center at Green Lake, Wisconsin (by train: two days, three changes, one in Chicago). The girls wore suits and heels (I think I even had a hat). Skipper Gribble, as the oldest boy, was in charge. Alas, even that fine leadership did not prevent our bags from going somewhere else for three or four days. (Try wearing a suit and heels for three days at Green Lake!)

As an adult member, I've been an eager participant in many adult leadership training events, even a clown workshop or two, sung in the choir (it's still hard to call him "Jim" after all those years of "Mr. B."), worked in various roles for the Board of Education. I've happily been Mary in two Christmas Eve tableaus. I've listened to Gene's sermons and wondered how on earth he knew so much about my personal quests, doubts, and pains. I've found resourcefulness through faith and joy through celebration. I've basked in the continuity of this community.

Now my sons are reaping the gifts of caring adults who know when to take them seriously. . . .

[Alice MacKay has been a member of our Myers Park Baptist Church family since 1957.]

Particular Remembrances

Harold A. Malmborg

Greetings to the Myers Park Baptist Church as you celebrate fifty years of Christian ministry and service.

It was my privilege to be on the staff of the Myers Park Baptist Church from September of 1951 to March of 1954. I believe I was the second intern selected by the church from Andover Newton Theological School.

Myers Park was a great adventure. From the halls of theological studies to a pastoral relationship with Dr. George Heaton and the members of Myers Park Baptist Church proved to be a rewarding and an important period in my ministry. I have always appreciated the warmth, acceptance, and positive support I received. Through all of my ministry, I have carried the stamp of the ministry of Dr. Heaton and the Myers Park congregation.

I have a number of particular remembrances:

- The caring and generosity of the church women: When we moved from the apartment provided by the church into our own home, the women of the church—one by one—surprised us with housewarming gifts all one afternoon and evening. What outpouring of love and good wishes.
- Moving into the new church building: Not long after I arrived on staff, we moved from the Queens College Chapel into the completed Sanctuary. I recall not only the physical move and the last minute details of getting the building completed, but the excitement and sheer joy of the congregation in worship in that magnificent setting. It was a time of fulfillment for those who had covenanted together to give expression to their faith in the most beautiful Sanctuary possible. The congregation responded through the years to the inspiration of Dr. Heaton as he presented the theme, "He Whom A Dream Hath Possessed."
- The creative Christian education program of senior high students using the Parent Parallel Plan: Each Sunday morning senior high students and their parents met separately using the same curriculum with parents always one week ahead of their children in their studies. As students covered the same material, parents were able to discuss and share questions and issues raised by the students. The program was demanding for both parents and students. Dr. Heaton gave this plan his entire commitment and energy.
- The Christmas Vacation College Breakfast: There was a large number of college students then as there probably is now. The meeting facilities were limited to the temporary buildings called the Huts. In those crude but practical buildings the church enriched her life in Christian

education and fellowship. College students of those days must remember the Christmas-time breakfasts. The church was letting them know they were appreciated and not forgotten in their absence.

The food was abundant, the decorations exquisite, and the program designed to enhance reunion and friendship. Charles Kuralt was a member of the group at that time. Through the years I have appreciated the contribution Charles has made to our national life.

- Family Nights: The delicious dinners prepared and served by Jessie and Anita each week in the small kitchen next to the church office not only satisfied our physical needs but gave us a sense of family that was so important at that time.

I remember on one occasion following Family Night, I turned the ignition key in my car and heard an explosion under the hood. Someone, or more, had wired an explosive that not only made noise but released a great amount of smoke. As I jumped from the car, great shouts of laughter greeted me and relieved my fears.

The same Anita Stroud who helped on Family Nights, we learned, conducted a regular Bible Story Time with the children of the housing project where she lived. During our time in Charlotte, the circle women organized to give support to Anita's own special ministry with "her" children.

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On the wall of my study is a framed statement, beautifully done in calligraphy with illuminations and signed by all the deacons of the church on March 1, 1954. I had accepted a call to the Freemason Street Baptist Church in Norfolk, Virginia, and at my last meeting with the Board of Deacons, I was presented with this beautiful expression of their appreciation.

I have always been grateful for their thoughtfulness and only wish I could adequately express to the Myers Park Baptist Church my gratitude for what the church and her members have meant to Virginia and me through the years. We thank God for every remembrance of you.

[Harold A. Malmborg was a member of our Myers Park Baptist Church family from 1951–1954 and served as an Associate Minister.]

Getting Started

Lex Marsh

In the fall of 1942, I met with a group of friends at the YMCA to talk about starting a Baptist Church in Myers Park. Most other denominations already had a church out there. I recall that Fred Helms from St. John's Baptist Church was one of the group of about twelve, as were Guy Carswell from First Baptist Church, and Frank Dowd and I from Pritchard Memo-

rial Baptist Church. Dr. Marvin Scruggs, a beloved doctor and active churchman, came. He became our leader. We couldn't have started with anyone better, and soon we were working on the possibility of starting a new church.

The one thing that spurred us on was when the Efirds gave us the church site. We had been talking about different sites, exploring what was available. The Efird family, Joe Efird and his brothers, gave us the lot—an ideal location. The Efird family was known for its benevolent nature and had contributed to Wake Forest College. This generous gift and fine location really moved us forward, and we set about to raise funds for a church building.

Ed Burnside stepped up to serve as the church building fund chairman. He was like a spark plug—urging us to dig deep. He reminded us that building a new church was a big financial undertaking. He was an effective, persuasive speaker and a successful businessman; we were fortunate to have him lead us in the building fund so successfully.

As we moved along, I had a strong feeling that we needed the guidance of our former ministers. Many others shared this idea. My parents had taken active roles at Pritchard Memorial, and I believe Frank Dowd's father was one of the founders there. So, we asked the three leading ministers—First Church, St. John's and Pritchard Memorial—to meet with us. We asked for their advice and guidance, and they were very helpful to us along the way. Dr. Williams, my minister, was always so kind when I called to ask his advice, and he encouraged us. We deeply appreciated their help. It was certainly not easy for these men to be losing so many of their members.

I was one of the group that met to interview Dr. Heaton. We talked with him all morning. I vividly recall that as the meeting closed, George said he would like to tell us that while we were not hiring his wife, he would, nevertheless, like us to know that Emily was not a typical Southern Baptist minister's wife. After they came and we got to know her, we found Emily to be a very unique individual. Perhaps she was not a conventional minister's wife, but I recall that she actively participated in the work of establishing our new church. She had excellent taste and made many helpful suggestions. Many of her ideas are among the traditions of our church today.

I'm optimistic about the future of our church. We have a fine facility and room to grow. We should attract a fine membership in the future as we have in the past, and I believe we will.

[Lex Marsh was one of our church founders and has been a member of our Myers Park Baptist Church family since 1943.]

Special Recollections

May Gray Mason

My father, Paul H. Efird, was one of the brothers who donated the property for Myers Park Baptist Church. The commemorative plaque is placed just outside the Chapel doors.

Ina Short (Mrs. H. M.), Chairman of the Circle Committee, asked me to organize a young women's circle. We met the first Monday mornings instead of afternoons.

Our two children, Ann and Lowell, were baptized by Dr. George Heaton. They were among the first members of Alice Berman's children's choirs.

In 1962 our daughter Ann was married to Robert Norton in the Sanctuary by Dr. Carlyle Marney. In 1964 my grandson, Robert, Jr., was dedicated in the Sanctuary. He and Penny now have two daughters and live in Louisiana.

[May Gray Mason has been a member of our Myers Park Baptist Church family since 1943.]

A Handful of Recollections

Bob McClernon

Here is a handful from many recollections of nearly a decade spent with the congregation and staff of Myers Park Baptist Church.

- Hearing George Heaton preach for the first time, and for the first time hearing "God" spoken as a three-syllable word.
- Ed Worrel, Bob Lane, Joe Spencer, and Lee Cain meeting for hours each month with a callow minister of youth, writing church school material.
- One hundred twenty-six junior highs with hormones all adither on retreat at Camp Mondamin.
- An about-to-become new senior minister making his initial and only appearance before a most properly dressed ninety-member pulpit committee, wearing a Stetson hat, white flannel suit, black string bow tie and white buck shoes.
- The ministerial staff on retreat at Guy and Clara Carswell's Linville Falls "cabin" extemporizing an unexpurgated and therefore untold account of the life of Lottie Moon.
- Pre-conversion Bea Blankenship questioning the orthodoxy of the clergy, and Priscilla Upchurch insisting that its heterodoxy was saintly by comparison with her own, and each being exactly correct in her assertion.

- Jo Huntington presiding over wedding rehearsals with the polished charm of a Paris Island Marine Corps drill instructor.
- Jim McCord, the president of Princeton Theological Seminary, saying to his old friend from Austin, as they stood in the Great Hall following a tour of the just-born and as yet unbaptized office wing of the new building, "Only one thing is missing. There, just above the stage, you should have lettered in gold the words, 'Lord, we have forsaken all to follow thee!'"
- Several hundred adults meeting yearly to read and discuss a book by a Daniel Day Williams, or Reuel Howe, or Walter Harrelson, bright lights in the theological sky in those days, after which the author would spend the better part of a week at the church to teach and to learn.
- Innovation and change, an authentically Christian "liberal" way of living trust in Jesus and his God, anchored in regard for Scripture and Tradition, an unselfconscious and unspoken openness to the Spirit, and determination to learn to think theologically about all of life.
- Kind, gracious, and devoted people, and Marney—tough and vulnerable, dreamer and realist, passionate in faith and doubt—who challenged and inspired and took pride in us all.

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My very best wishes and profound gratitude to the Myers Park Baptist Church on its Fiftieth Anniversary.

[Bob McClernon was a member of our Myers Park Baptist Church family from 1956–1965 and served as an Associate Minister.]

One Encounter with Dr. Marney

Ike McLaughlin

In the late 1960s Dr. Marney asked me if I would teach an adult Sunday School class which would target as potential members those who were not attending any class for a variety of reasons, both personal and theological. I agreed, but after about two years of teaching the class and spending much time and effort trying to help several members with their rather difficult personal problems, I decided that I would like to resign. Knowing that there were members of the congregation with professional expertise that could be used to help these people, I felt that one of them could be more effective as teacher for the class.

With this thought in mind, I approached Bob McClernon, the Minister of Education, and told him that I wanted to resign my position. He replied that, because Dr. Marney was the one who had recruited me, I should tender my resignation to Dr. Marney himself.

I went to Dr. Marney, fully expecting that he would express his appreciation for the good job I had done and perhaps request that I continue. To my great surprise, Dr. Marney's immediate response with a straight face and his God-like voice was, "Do you know what your problem is? You're an egotistical bastard!" After recovering from the shock of his statement, I replied that I might be egotistical but my mother could prove that I wasn't a bastard! He explained further, "You're a bastard because you think all these problems started when you were born, and you're egotistical because you think you can cure people. Maybe God and Jesus can cure people, but you can't."

After thinking it over, I decided that Marney was right. Most of the problems of this world were here before I showed up and will be here after I'm gone. With God's help and sometimes a little assistance from professionals, people cure themselves. All I needed to do was be a friend and be there when I could.

I continued to teach the class for a couple of years after that.

[Ike McLaughlin has been a member of our Myers Park Baptist Church family since 1960.]

Random Remembrances

Barbara McManeus

I recall in the 1950s spending the night sleeping on the floor of the Hut while chaperoning high schoolers from the church. I also chaperoned at Camp Mondamin, sleeping in 32 degree temperatures. There was no sleeping either night!

Another remembrance is of having my five-year-old son's Sunday School teacher tell me not to send him by way of his big sister, but to bring him myself as he was found skipping class playing on the swings.

I vividly recall climbing the scaffolding on the tower of the church to hang the Christmas wreath when the Sanctuary was being painted.

The love and support was felt from the whole church at the memorial service for my husband, Bob.

[Barbara McManeus has been a member of our Myers Park Baptist Church family since 1950.]

How God Came to Us One Advent

Randy Mishoe

The booklet committee teases me to lift out *one* memory from the special treasure chest that is Myers Park Baptist Church. Like a child at

Baskin-Robbins, I really would rather sample a lot of them before settling for one scoop on my cone.

But let me share with you the first one about the children. This is appropriate because, after all, had it not been for that wonderful children's program and staff and the playground Lee got so excited about, Barbara and I might never have been able to get her away from Raleigh. But not only did we get Lee to come, she was excited about it. The kids were great, and, obviously, they had a special place in the life of the church. Thus it was that they came to play a part in a little drama that touched a number of us and still leaves me with a very warm feeling.

The time was the Advent season during my first year at Myers Park Baptist Church—1973. During one of the ministerial staff meetings, Gene asked how we might experience the surprising way God comes to us and opens us to grace. Almost of one mind the following scenario came into being.

Sunday worship had begun. The service had progressed to the time for prayers. Meanwhile, I had gone to the children's department and collected as many of the children as I could handle. I gathered them around and told them we were going to spring a special surprise on their parents and everyone. We were going to march down the center aisle of the church singing and playing rhythm instruments.

With some few reservations, they loved the idea. I got my guitar, gave them every rhythm instrument available, and we "practiced" "Lord of the Dance." It may not have been music as Jim Berry imagined music to be, but it was joyful—and loud.

Ready to perform, committed to an ultimate surprise, we slipped through the tunnel with whispers and giggles and stood waiting in the narthex for our cue. When Gene asked the congregation, "How will God come to us this Advent?" we burst forth with all the enthusiasm and conviction we could muster. Not knowing whether to feel shock, shame, or love, some mothers cried, I am told. Fathers looked on in amazement. Deacons worried about decorum, and the staff wondered what they had turned loose. But the kids—they sang and danced their way down the aisle and back—into history, into our memories, and into our hearts forever and ever. Amen.

And thank you all, you wonderful kids, wherever you may be. You were magnificent. I love you.

[Randy Mishoe was a member of our Myers Park Baptist Church family from 1973 to 1979 and served as Associate Minister.]

How Things Can Go Awry

Fran Morrison

My favorite story to tell is about Emily Heaton. I was too young to remember George as our senior minister, but they lived about one-half mile from where I grew up on Sardis Lane. I can remember getting on the milk truck at my house, riding down Valleybrook Road and up to Dr. Heaton's house, making deliveries with the milk man.

When I was nine years old, my neighbor friend and I rode our bikes up to the "old chicken farm" to explore around. That property was once owned by Russell Crump (a member of our church), and it is now the Providence Square Apartments and Shopping Center. We parked our bikes and piddled around for awhile, but when we went back to get our bikes, they were gone!

We promptly went home and told my Dad—with wide eyes—"Our bikes have been stolen!" He called Russell to ask if he knew anything about it. Russell said, "Oh, yes, Emily Heaton is here and she was out walking her dogs and said she had heard some ruckus." Not knowing who was on the property, she had taken our bikes to his house.

Dad drove us to Russell's house. I was already scared to death, but when I saw the police car in Russell's driveway, I got really scared, and my Dad got really angry—but not at me. The policeman talked to us a little bit, and we picked up our bikes and went home. I'm sure the policeman was a scare tactic because we certainly weren't destroying property—just trespassing.

It was a long time before I ever got up my nerve to go exploring again, and I never left my bike anywhere again.

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Our children's choir staff was having a covered dish dinner, and each person was to sign up for a portion of the dinner. Lauretta Short signed up to bring dessert. She went by Myers Park County Club, ordered twelve chocolate eclairs, and in leaving, said, "Put Ralph Short's name on them and I'll pick them up Friday at noon. When she returned on Friday, there were twelve chocolate eclairs waiting...and on top of each one was written, "Ralph Short"!

[Fran Morrison has been a member of our Myers Park Baptist Church family since 1966 and currently serves as our Children's Choirs Coordinator and Assistant to the Minister of Music.]

An Inauspicious Beginning

Dale Mullennix

I remember the first time that Dick Sutton and I led a worship service together. It was in the summer of 1979. Neither of us had been working here even a month, and Gene Owens and Jim Berry were both out of town that Sunday.

The service began badly and then got worse. First, Dick began reading the Opening Sentences before the congregation was ready. Next, I started the Prayer of Confession without allowing time for the silent prayer first. What else could go wrong?

In those days a tape recorder was kept under the pulpit connected to a recording microphone attached to the top of the pulpit. Each week a member of the staff was responsible for seeing that a tape was in the recorder and then putting the machine in "record" mode, to be activated when the preacher turned on the recording microphone on the pulpit.

As Dick reached the top of the winding pulpit stairs, ready to begin his sermon, he turned on the recording microphone. Unfortunately, the recorder was set for "play," not "record." About thirty seconds into his first sermon at Myers Park, organ music (taped the previous Sunday) began filling the Sanctuary. At first, no one knew where it was coming from or what to do. After the laughter died down, members of the congregation began calling out instructions for finding the recorder.

That was our first Sunday leading worship at Myers Park Baptist Church. Whether it ever got better is still up for debate.

[Dale Mullennix has been a member of our Myers Park Baptist Church family since 1979 and serves as an Associate Minister.]

Remembrances of the Church's Beginning

Jane Ellen Norman Nichols

Dr. and Mrs. Marvin Scruggs were among those calling around to see who might be interested in joining a new Myers Park Baptist congregation, and Mrs. Scruggs was the one who called us in the fall of 1942. Living in the area, newly married and with one baby son, we were interested. First Baptist Church was too far away. (Some may not know that the organ was given by the Scruggs and there is a plaque near it to that effect.)

The first services were in January of 1943 and were held in Queens College Music Building (Ninniss Auditorium). There were visiting ministers for nine months until the George Heatons came the next fall.

Lauretta Bombara was the first organist. Being young and pretty, she captivated many of the single young men, including Don Bryant (who was in Davidson College) and eventually Ralph Short, who claimed her.

Alice Berman was choir director, and a few of us are left who sang in the choir. I will always remember her beautiful red hair and charming manner and particularly "The Carol of the Bells" at Christmas time. We had white robes—no flowered dresses and hats in the choir.

At first, gatherings were held in the old Efird house and then the Hut was built. The house was used for church offices and Sunday School classes, and the Hut was for meetings and family night suppers. Every Thursday night was family night with a delicious meal directed by Bess Benoit and served by waiters decked out in servants' uniforms and white gloves. My husband T.J. was Superintendent of the Junior Department of the Sunday School, and some of the boys in there were Dickson Spangler, George Heaton, Jr., and Carl Biggers.

The first building to be built was the Roswell Avenue class building, but it was used for everything. There was one room upstairs that was large enough for meetings and dinners. The library was adjoining it. I remember being at the head table one night at a deacons' dinner when one of our founding fathers "preached" too long and Ed Martin, who was beside me, whispered, "If he doesn't soon finish, my five-day deodorant will give out." It wasn't very becoming for me to double up laughing but I couldn't help myself.

Some of the wives of our founding fathers were very instrumental in influencing the style and quality of the Sanctuary—ones like Mrs. Frank Dowd, Mrs. Joe Efird, Mrs. Henry Benoit, and particularly our minister's wife, Mrs. Heaton. Everything had to be of the very best—the handmade bricks from Carter's Grove, Virginia, the early American style of Sir Christopher Wren in England, steeple, Williamsburg architecture, and all. The foremost church architect in the country, Mr. A. Hensel Fink, was hired to design the Sanctuary. Many of us didn't know a "nave" from a "narthex" but we soon learned. We'd never seen little doors on the pews before, and it wasn't until later in life that we saw them in Charleston, Virginia, Boston, and then in England. We are grateful now for the taste and knowledge of those who insisted on following tradition (though not our Baptist tradition) and replicating some of the early Christian churches in this country.

I remember hearing about the wood carver, Mr. Chickaroosky, who was from Czechoslovakia. It seems that after carving the pulpit, lectern, choir stalls, and getting to the pews, he ran out of walnut. Undaunted, he had a walnut tree cut down from one of the city parks in Philadelphia—oblivious to the fact that he could be thrown in jail for it.

The architect, Mr. Fink, had asked to be consulted and to approve anything that was ever added to the Sanctuary. We have abided by that request, and several years ago even sent him Tebee Hawkins' drawings of the Chapel chandelier for his approval before having the three large chan-

deliers made for the Sanctuary. He made a few minor suggestions which were incorporated. He is in his mid-nineties now, so we were fortunate to get them when we did.

Some years later Sunday School classes were held in the old Harris house on the corner of Queens and Radcliffe Avenue. It must have been in the late '50s because we were living next door. Jim Norman was in high school and I was Superintendent of the Senior High Department which met in a room upstairs. A highlight during those years for the students was the practice of the church sending students to the American Baptist Conference Center at Green Lake, Wisconsin, for one week each summer. Gensie Johnston and I had the pleasure of being among the leaders sent one summer.

This was about the time that *Life Magazine* somehow heard about the unusual philosophy our church was teaching and sent a reporter down to interview and write about it. The article was published in *Life* on February 11, 1957, but some of us were disappointed that several of the pictures taken, such as the one of our family reading the Bible, did not appear in the magazine. The philosophy they thought was so unique was the emphasis put on parents themselves being the kind of persons they should be since "example" is not just one way of influencing others, but the only way.

[Jane Ellen Norman Nichols has been a member of our Myers Park Baptist Church family since 1943.]

Memories

Elizabeth Nuckolls

In looking back fifty-one years ago, I remember moving to Charlotte on Sharon Road just two blocks from where our church is now. My husband Tommy traveled a lot, filling in for younger men who had gone to war. Because we had lived in a small community outside of Greenville, S.C., such a big city as Charlotte frightened me, especially since I did not know one person when I arrived. One of my first visitors, though, was Mrs. Frank Dowd, and I will never forget what a lovely, gracious person she was.

Since I was Baptist born and Baptist bred, I wanted my children to be Baptist too. So I bundled up all three most Sundays and carried them to St. John's Baptist Church. Later when Myers Park Baptist was in the planning, we were delighted to know we would have a church nearby. We all began attending the church which had begun meeting in Queens College Auditorium. I do remember so well when Dr. Heaton preached there. We had been having visiting ministers until he was invited to be our first minister.

While we were meeting at Queens, our Sunday School Class was formed. Originally it met on the front row seats in the auditorium.

In 1951 we finally moved into our new church with great pride. Our choir was directed by Alice Berman, and I remember when Lauretta Bombara came to play our new organ. She always had a smile and had a great personality.

My daughter Ann tells me about retreats they went on with Dr. Heaton. George, his son, was about the age of my daughter. Dr. Heaton and Mrs. Heaton were very active with that group. They went to Montreat, Ridge Crest and Tablerock Park. Bob and Katherine Poerschke were very active also and went on retreats with the young people to Lake Summit and Green Cove. Bob loved that lake and eventually bought a house there.

Over the years the church meant so much to Tommy. He joined the Men's Class which became very active in helping others. Bob Chesney was president.

At one time the church decided that when we entered the narthex, there should be complete silence—no visiting and talking. I don't think this is in effect now.

[Elizabeth Nuckolls has been a member of our Myers Park Baptist Church family since 1943.]

My Steeple Story

Carole Lane Outwater

When I was young, the church was young. We've been growing up together all these years—from our early years when we children met in her wooden huts to now when we have these magnificent buildings to house this established church. The images I see today still include what was. It's that way when one has history with people and places. So for me, when I look at various things around here, stories of what was and is now intertwine.

One such story comes back to me every now and then as I look sunward toward the steeple. I remember the day I was up there inside the steeple as the church was being constructed back in the early '50s. That was a day of mischief as well as a day of finding personal courage. Perhaps that's why I remember the episode so well.

Mother dropped us off, my older sister and I. We walked the path from the Selwyn Avenue curb to attend children's choir in the smaller wooden hut. Sue was older, taller and pretty much a "leader of the pack" type of person. I was a freckled-face girl of seven or eight years of age, most likely with white cotton socks falling down around my Buster Brown shoes. Sue led. I followed along, trailing up the walk. When we ap-

proached the Hut, several girls told us Mrs. Berman had not arrived yet, so we messed around for a little while, looking for something to do.

It was impossible for us to resist what was currently happening on the property. The Sanctuary was under construction. The workers were leaving for the day, and the age-old lure of exploring this place we called our church home was strong. I loved exploring buildings under construction, the fresh pine scent filling my senses. Also, most buildings under construction contained little, flat metal discs—plugs or something. We liked to pretend these were money. We always sought these among the sawdust. So with the excitement of adventure in mind and possible discoveries to behold, we took off to find what we could inside this fledgling structure. We did all know we were probably not supposed to be exploring inside. We did it anyway.

We ran through the building quickly, knowing we were on borrowed time. We were all excited when we found we could climb into the new balcony. Racing up the steps, we dared each other to look down into the cavity below. One of the other girls yelled out she had discovered a ladder which led somewhere above and that it must be an attic of sorts. We knew about the mysteries of attics. After looking at the ladder, we were not too sure we wanted to venture above, for it was one of those makeshift ladders, meant to ferry workers about until the real thing was in place. We dared each other and helped each other ascend into the dark space overhead. The rickety ladder was a challenge, but we were all glad we tried it for what we found above was more than we expected. We had entered what we realized was the steeple. It was dark and the space was small; however, several boarded-over openings on each wall gave peepholes of light to the outside. We saw with awe that we were way up—as high as the trees.

Everything looked different from this perspective. We bumped each other out of the way to look from each side. This was really something! What a great secret find!

We were really savoring our lofty Sanctuary when we heard the big bell clanging outside the Hut. The bell was calling us to choir. Others waiting for the choir door to open had seen us earlier and might tell where we had headed, so we all started at once for the opening below, not wanting to get caught. We wanted to keep this discovery a secret.

Being the youngest meant no status in that band of adventurers that day. The game plan seemed to be getting out and not being seen, and we scurried like ants as we lined up to descend below. However, we were to find that going up a makeshift ladder was easier than descending. One by one the older girls popped down and scampered down the balcony steps into the light below. The girl before me tore down the ladder, racing to keep up, and, as a result of her ferocity, the ladder shifted away from the opening. By the time I poked my head into the opening for my turn, she was out of sight.

I was the last one. I was alone. The ladder was no longer against the opening to the steeple. It had rotated and was now resting precariously in

the corner several feet away from the opening. I did what came naturally—I yelled, "Help!" My cries for help were lost among the sounds of everyone's feet jumping over boards and stomping on hollow footings below. Then there was silence. They were all out. Gone. My heart was the only sound I heard. It was beating all the way up into my ears.

"O.K. Here's what I could do," I said to myself. I could wait for someone to discover I had not made it back to the choir hut with them. But, what if they didn't notice? Surely my sister, Sue, would come back for me. She was older and always looking after me. But then, she would have to say where she was going AND where she had been. By then I could imagine all the girls had made it into choir and had joined the ranks singing their scales. Finally, I just knew I had to do something.

I dropped flat on my stomach, poked my head through the opening and reached out to find how far away the ladder had shifted. I stretched my hand out, trying to see if I could get a little handhold on the plank ladder. If I could get it to turn just a little, maybe one side could return to brace me. I moved it a little, out from where it had settled in the corner. A little more each time. Finally, I could feel one side settling against the opening to the steeple, while the other moved as if it were on hinges. I stood up, turned around, and stuck a leg down only to find I couldn't feel the top rung of the ladder. I lowered myself even further until my toe touched the rung. Then, before I could think, I kept moving downward until the ladder careened away from its footing. With one final jump, the ladder and I both found solid ground. I was safe!

I do not remember the blinding run through the building to daylight outside. I do remember running inside the choir hut, squeezing into a row of people and taking my place singing scales. No one discovered our adventure. It is one I will always remember, one that marked a day of discovery about myself. It was a good feeling to know I had faced something scary and had mustered enough courage to pull me through. Childhood mischief, yes. Yet, today, if I hear of someone going up into the steeple for whatever reason, you will hear me say, "Can I come too?"

[Carole Outwater has been a member of our Myers Park Baptist Church family since 1954 and has served as Director of Pre-School Ministries since 1985.]

Resurrection

Carol Pearsall

When thoughts of our church and my church experience come to my mind, a wave of feelings of resurrection surfaces. From my earliest memories of kindergarten when Mrs. Elmore (Jewell), my teacher, "saved" me when I was miserably holding orange pulp in my mouth for fear that someone would discover that I didn't like the oranges someone had shared with our class...

...to the fun I had running around the quonset Hut at those early Family Nights with my friend, Marsha Trainham;

...to seeing that important man, George Heaton, and thinking he must be "God" (later to the confusion when "God" changed into Carlyle Marney);

...to Miss Baker's third grade Sunday School in the Pine Room when I first remember stories of faith;

...to my Aunt Veegie opening new doors of understanding when she casually talked about the Bible as stories rather than literal happenings;

...to Mr. Gray's (Farnum) sixth grade Sunday School class which was very special, not only because it was only one hour which was a welcome new "grown-up" experience for me but also because he brought unusual, unheard-of flavors of ice cream for us to sample;

...to attending Bud Wilmot's confirmation classes and hearing for the first time just how special I was when he taught each of us that God so loved *me* that he gave his only Son;

...to joining the church and my grandfather coming to the front after the service and giving me a big hug, making me realize that I had just done something of true importance;

...to "getting ducked," as we called it then, by Carlyle Marney while he held my nose...a baptism I will always remember but did not understand the significance of until much later;

...to retreats in junior high school at In-the-Oaks where teachers such as Coy Chambers and Jo became more like "friends" than "just adults";

...to my high school years of sitting with Pop, Mummy, and Gay in our special pew almost every Sunday;

...to dropping out of church in college;

...to getting married by this new minister, "Gene," with my first impressions of support through some big decisions;

...to "coming home again" to church after my college sabbatical;

...to having children and teaching two-year-olds who started as babies and finished as children;

...to the feeling of confidence in me as an adult when Gail Dowd called me to ask me to serve on the Board of Missions;

...to being elected a deacon;

...to working with "BJ" on the Board of Women of the Church, giving me a new understanding of special gifts and how we work together for accomplishments and grow with leaps and bounds;

...to an adult discipleship class with a special beach retreat where I was able to see God through comparisons with the constant force of the ocean;

...to many experiences in worship when a moment touched my soul by words of a sermon that really hit home or by hearing beautiful music like the Lutkin benediction or the congregation singing "The Lord's Prayer" when emotions would flow with tears;

...to feeling accepted no matter what "stage of faith" I may be in at Sunday School;

...to being guided by Dale Mullennix and Gene Owens and Dick Sutton to a better understanding of my purpose in this world;

...to the many opportunities of helping others where I was helped as much if not more than those I was helping;

...to being proud to be a member of a group of people who do not succumb to the pressures of society but who stand for what they believe to be right and just rather than what may be popular.

Resurrection...the people of the Myers Park Baptist Church and the opportunities they create have truly resurrected me over and over and over and over.

[Carol Pearsall has been a member of our Myers Park Baptist Church family since 1963.]

Memorable Times

Sara Rabun

When we came to this church, Dr. Marney had just had his heart attack. I still find it hard to believe that a church could hang in there like ours did. We were welcomed, ministered to, loved by so many—both staff and members.

When we first visited the church, it was so different from our Mobile, Alabama, First Baptist, yet like it in many other ways. We visited other churches in Charlotte but always came back. A close friend (a Presbyterian) said, "Sara, give it more of a chance." We did and found our way.

The youth program and choir program were excellent. The training Sally, our daughter, got in music and education could not be bought.

Then came Gene Owens—he was really "church" to me. He shook us up, made us mad, loved us, counseled us, and helped me through many rough times. How I wish I could be for him what he has been for me.

I remember the time I was walking Sally's Old English Sheepdog, Chaucer, near the church. He was a small pup, and I needed to see about something in the church, so I carried Chaucer in with me. Gene and a minister from Scotland were passing in the lobby of the Great Hall. Gene asked me why in the world did I have a dog in the church. Out of the air I said, "I brought him to be baptized." The minister from Scotland had a paper cup of Coke in his hand. He laughed, put his fingers in his cup and baptized Chaucer. I later attended that church in Scotland. We always said Chaucer was the only animal member of the church. Chaucer even came to Sally and Dan's wedding. He visited church many times after he was "baptized."

I remember the anger and hurt so many of us suffered when the election of women as deacons was first proposed. I was on the Board of Women of the Church and was the brunt of many an angry man and

woman—Who do you think you are? But I remember the support and love at that time also.

When Carter Heyward came, I was Fellowship Committee Chairman and active in the church. I remember, with love, Gini Osborne opening her home for a party for Carter. I remember seeing Carter's parents supporting their child in a difficult weekend.

I remember the marvelous Christmas week the church used to have: the trees, the dinner, the children's parties, the Women of the Church luncheon. We had fun, we worked, we fussed; we were always there.

I remember the Fortieth Anniversary celebration when Roy and I were in charge of the barbeque. Everyone kidded us about eating barbeque everywhere (for free), shopping for just the right person to cook and serve the entire membership. It turned out great and the food was good, I thought.

I remember Sally and Dan's wedding and reception. It would not have been without Mattie Mae Gray. Jewell had just retired, so we had no one to head the kitchen help. Mattie Mae worked and worked. So many friends helped her I could not begin to name everyone—staff and friends. Of course, who could have a wedding without Jo Huntington? She keeps up with everything and keeps us in line, loves us, bosses us, and does an excellent job.

The church gave me a chance to go to Green Lake. It was there in Group Work that I was able to grow as a person and learn more about myself—some of it good, some not so good, and I hope I have changed most of the "not so good."

I remember the Fellowship Class—how they visited and followed up when we first came to Charlotte. They really loved and cared for us.

I remember the good times at Black Mountain retreats and the learning experiences there. I remember George Barrett caring for me when I was hurt and could not find my way at a church retreat.

I remember B.J. Gilley helping me decorate, plan, and give a program for Women of the Church. How lovely and talented she was.

So many things I remember that have added to my life these past twenty-five years. How grateful I am that I found this church. It truly is church.

[Sara Rabun has been a member of our Myers Park Baptist Church family since 1967.]

The Church Site and Other Recollections

Elizabeth Raby

Unless you were living in Charlotte in September, 1924, you might never have seen my home that stood where our Sanctuary is now located. According to a report in *The Charlotte Observer*, "Fire of undetermined origin completely consumed the palatial residence of J.B. Efird, located opposite Queens College. Firemen could only stand and watch the blaze because no fire plugs were in the area of Myers Park." At that time, this land was outside the city limits.

Since the time the church received the donation of this property, it gradually has acquired the three adjoining properties on Selwyn Avenue and one on Roswell Avenue. Recently, the newly-acquired Selwyn Avenue home adjacent to the church was rented to Queens College.

As a leader of our first Brownie Troop, I remember the activities and the little girls who came in uniforms, of course, to our meetings in the Hut. One of our members, Susan Thomas, who was about seven years old at the time, volunteered for any and all projects that we undertook.

In the very early days our choir practiced for a time in our home on Selwyn Avenue. When I was visiting there, I could always recognize one voice that was not always on key. I don't remember who the director was (or if the choir had one yet), but I'm sure at that time all who wanted to sing in the choir were encouraged to join the group.

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An amusing incident Jo Huntington remembers happened one Sunday in our old building when she came upon a class of youngsters singing a hymn. Jo recalled, "Over the sweet voices there was one booming out like a bullfrog." The singer was none other than the minister's son, George Heaton, Jr.

[Elizabeth Raby has been a member of our Myers Park Baptist Church family since 1946.]

Remembrances

Frances ReVille

The first time I went to a Women of the Church meeting, I came after it had started and everyone was standing singing. We were in one of the Huts and chairs were placed around the wall, so I stood next to the last person. She graciously offered to share her hymnal, but I declined, saying, "They never sing anything here that I know." It was Mrs. Heaton.

When Bud Wilmot came, I was working in First Grade with Lalla Gribble on the stage in the second floor of the Education Building. We had twenty-nine children and no room to breath. On a rainy Sunday morning I went to the first floor for something we needed, and Bud and some other workers were standing at the door lamenting the rain. I said, "Well, I always pray for rain on Sunday morning as we have only twenty-eight children instead of the usual twenty-nine." The look on Bud's face defies description—I thought I was fired! Then he laughed.

Below is an excerpt from a September, 1947, issue of Dr. Heaton's newsletter that I have saved:

> My Dear Church Members:
>
> Well, we certainly had a lot of fun getting our 1000 Church Members. It all happened this way. Sunday morning we had 999 Church Members when Mr. Jacques ReVille of 1539 Stanford Place, with MGM Pictures joined us. This gave us our thousand members. Mr. and Mrs. Conrad Helms and their son Charles have moved to Kansas City and requested their letters for the church there, so that dropped it back to 997. We were happy however to receive into our membership Mr. and Mrs. Anatoly Kaminin, and Mrs. Kaminin's mother, Dr. Alexandra Wesselitshaja (pronounced Vessel), all of 2407 North Pine St. This brought us back up to our 1000 again. It was with great regret that we granted a letter to Mrs. Joe Myers to unite with the church to which her husband belongs, and so we were back to 999 again when Mrs. Roslyn Edwards Shoemaker of 217 S. Caswell Road joined us and that brought us right back up to the 1000 again. But we were not there very long, because Mr. and Mrs. Lansing Brown had written us from Richmond that they were going to join a church up there, so that brought us down to 998. Then came Mr. and Mrs. Frank E. Edwards of 320 Ridgewood Ave. Mr. Edwards is with Duke Power Company, and they are eligible for Couples I or Men's II or Women's I or IV. And that brought us right back up to one thousand again. Imagine how happy we were when Mrs. S. B. Rouse, who is Mrs. Edwards' mother, joined us and that made a membership today of 1001. Mrs. Rouse lives at 320 Ridgewood Ave., and is eligible for Women's III.

[Frances ReVille has been a member of our Myers Park Baptist Church family since 1947.]

A First Christmas at Myers Park Baptist Church

David Rockwell

Everyone had told me how wonderful the Tableau service was and how much it would speak to me about this place. Having been part of the Christmas traditions of dozens of other churches, I made assumptions about what to expect. Little did I know....

The ministers took turns greeting worshipers in the narthex and serving communion in the Sanctuary. My first "shift" found me as part of the welcoming team. Intimate chaos was the scene as persons hugged each other, college students were welcomed home, and complete strangers greeted one another. I had still to learn the names of church members who spoke with me and made their newest minister feel at home. This was church.

I took a break to enter the Sanctuary with other worshipers and to experience the spirit there. A tangible sense of holiness surrounded me with the silenced voices and meditative music. What a contrast to the energy at the other side of the door. This was church.

Serving communion is always powerfully moving for me. Yet this time the exchanged words were not always enough. In the spontaneous embraces, in the bending down to allow a child to reach the plate, in the glimpses of youth and adults acting out the nativity scene; here was a feeling of community like no other I have felt. This was church. This was Christmas.

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Taken from the Fellowship Pad on Easter Sunday, 1992:

"I'm really glad I'm joining this church today!"
"Me too. This church is so cool."

On that Easter, six teenagers joined us and became part of the story.

The Parable of the Air Force Recruiter

The youth minister was traveling from the church to the far-off land of In-The-Oaks in preparation for a gathering of adolescents. And yea, the faithful car of the youth minister did run out of gas half-way up the mountain on that pathway called Interstate 40. The youth minister proceeded to begin the difficult journey up the mountain in much-cursed western boots while valiantly poking his thumb in the same direction. And verily, Baptist church vans by the score did pass the struggling pedestrian at high speeds. The occupants were in a hurry to reach the place called Ridgecrest where their faith could be

strengthened. A voice spoke to the youth minister saying, "Why don't you hang a 'Baptist Minister Here' sign around your neck?" but, alas, there was no paper. Presently, an officer of the law approached in his super-charged chariot. He too did not respond to the distress and frantic waving of the foot-sore traveler. Finally, an air Force Recruiter approached in his trusty Ford Fiesta. And yes, the Recruiter did thusly stop and provide air-conditioned transportation for the youth minister to the nearest merchant of fossil fuel. And then the Recruiter did drive the extra mile back down the mountain with the youth minister to the thirsty auto.

Verily, Verily, I say to you: the Air Force Recruiter was a good neighbor. Go thou and do likewise. (And check your fossil fuel gauge.)

[David Rockwell has been a member of our Myers Park Baptist Church family since 1991 and serves as our Youth Minister.]

My Family and Our Myers Park Baptist Church

Dorothy Sargent

Myers Park Baptist Church means a great deal to me and to my family. I'm thankful to have known all three ministers, and I have a picture of the three of them together.

Our family was transferred here by Celanese Corporation (with whom my husband Bob was employed) from Belham Manor, New York, in the summer of 1953. Our sons Robert and Richard were assigned to Myers Park High School and Myers Park Elementary School, respectively.

Two ladies from Myers Park Baptist Church called on me after we had visited the church and had returned from a Florida vacation. Then, on Richard's birthday in September, the Minister of Education called to wish him a happy birthday!

Very soon I joined the women's Fidelis Class, Bob joined a men's class, and we became active in the church. Bob became a deacon and served as secretary of that board. After women were allowed to be deacons years later, I was elected one.

For many years I taught in the Junior Department. As part of my training, I attended and graduated from the American Baptist Lab School at Green Lake, Wisconsin. When we moved into our new Education building in 1962, I was teaching fourth graders every Sunday. Serving as secretary of the Women's Missionary Society, as program chairman of my circle, and as co-organizer with Nettie Smith of Senior Fellowship were some of my other responsibilities over the years.

Dr. Marney attended the college and high school graduations of Robert and Richard in May of 1961. Both Robert and Richard later earned doctorates.

Then, in September of 1961, my husband died. The church purchased a beautiful silver service with the memorial gifts sent to honor Bob.

Dr. Owens has widened our church horizons by serving on various boards in Charlotte and at the state level. He has challenged us to have an international view, partly because of his sabbatical position at the seminary in Rüschlikon, Switzerland.

Do you wonder why I am so happy to be a member of Myers Park Baptist Church?

[Dorothy Sargent has been a member of our Myers Park Baptist Church family since 1953.]

A Special Loan of Buses

Gordon Senter

It must have been about 1975 or maybe 1976. I had been teaching third and fourth graders in Sunday Church School for a year or two. The Elementary Department was planning its annual fall trip to Morrow Mountain State Park for a Sunday of worship in the outdoors, hiking, picnicking, and playing games. This was one event that both the children and adults looked forward to with great anticipation.

Times were tough then, too, and we found there was not enough money in our Education Department budget to rent a bus or some vans, our usual modes of transportation. We discussed the possibility of hauling everyone there and back in private cars and station wagons but decided for a variety of reasons that was not a workable idea. We explored as many other possibilities as we could, but to no avail. We were ready to cancel the outing for the year when I had an idea.

Some months earlier I had met Dr. Walter "Jack" Hudson in the hospital. Dr. Hudson was a fiery, fundamentalist preacher (a former race car driver) who was pastor of Northside Baptist Church which he had started twenty years earlier and built into a thriving independent congregation. Not only did the church have one of the most distinctive buildings in town, they supported several missionaries and had their own kindergarten-through-twelfth grade school. And they had buses—school buses—lots of them! (We had already inquired of several Myers Park churches about the use of their church buses with negative results.) Even though I had seen him only a few times in the hospital, I had developed a lot of respect and a sense of shared ideals with this gentle giant of a man whose articulated theology differed so much from my own. So I dared to call him, explain our situation, and ask to rent two of his buses (we had a little money).

Dr. Hudson very graciously agreed, after checking with the proper members of his congregation, to let us have two buses for that last Sunday in October. He refused to allow us to pay any rent or even to pay for the gas and furnished two drivers. I do not recall the names of those two gentlemen who donated their time and service. They did allow us to feed them lunch!

So, that Sunday our Elementary Department rode to Morrow Mountain and back in two bright yellow buses clearly marked with large black letters that read "NORTHSIDE BAPTIST CHURCH." I loved it! A gift of one great congregation to another!

Dr. Hudson died in November, 1990. I spent many hours with him during the last painful years of his life. My respect and love for him deepened, and I have never forgotten his gift to our church.

[Gordon Senter has been a member of our Myers Park Baptist Church family since 1972.]

Remembrances of Our Beginning

Ina Short

In November, 1942, my husband Harold and I read an item in *The Charlotte Observer* that was of real interest to us. It was a story about a group of Baptist laymen that had met to discuss plans to start a Baptist Church in Myers Park. The need for a church in this area had been discussed for many years, but no group had made an effort to start such a church. We lived in Myers Park and were members of the First Baptist Church downtown.

A short time later, an Open Meeting was held in Ninniss Auditorium of Queens College to discuss the organizing of the church. It was on December 6, 1942 and Dr. I. G. Greer, the new president of the State Baptist Association, attended. He challenged those present to put forth their best efforts to build what he saw as one of the strongest churches in the South.

The next meeting came on December 20, 1942. Dr. Marvin Scruggs presided, and a permanent organizing committee was elected. There were ten members of the committee. J. H. Bridges was chairman and I was selected as one of the members. Before the meeting ended, a scroll was presented which became the Charter Member Roll of the church. One hundred fifty-four names were signed that afternoon including our names and our sons, Milton and Ralph. Veegie, Milton's bride as of December 19, 1942, joined the Charter Roll some few months later, and in 1946 Ralph married our church organist, Lauretta Bombara. Now, each one in our family was a member of the Myers Park Baptist Church.

Our first church service was on January 17, 1943, and we had 267 members enrolled by that day. I recall those early days before the first minister was called. One unique and unusual decision that we made was

that all members must contribute financially as they could, and all members must do what was asked of them in the way of service. Many were experienced church workers while others had never taken an active part in any public church work. Soon we were actively, enthusiastically working together to start a new church. I will not go into the details of the various committees, their chairmen and members, but I will say that a Sunday School for all ages came forth, and a new church began to function. I was the Superintendent of all the children's departments. We held classes in the bedrooms, garage, sunroom and even the kitchen of the Efird house which we had named the Fellowship House. Adult classes were held in Queens College classrooms across the street.

Sunday, August 1, 1943, was a most happy day for us. It was on this day, after extensive research and correspondence, that Dr. George Heaton was extended our unanimous call as first minister of the church. Under his leadership, the church grew more rapidly than anyone dreamed. In his first sermon on September 19, 1943, he used the theme "He Whom a Dream Hath Possessed," a poem by Shalmas O'Sheel. As long as he remained pastor, his sermon beginning each fall season was based on part of this poem as well as his farewell sermon in 1957.

We spent a great deal of our time on activities concerning our new church, but the war was uppermost in everyone's mind during those days. The names of members in military service were printed in the church bulletin each Sunday. Charles Upchurch, Sr. was chairman of the committee keeping contact with our service men. Dr. Heaton's sermons were printed and mailed to those in service each week; and by January, 1945, we had 61 members in military service.

From the time the church was organized, a building fund campaign was undertaken each year. Ed Burnside was fund-raising chairman. One year the women of the church were asked to help by emphasizing the building fund campaign. We had a special dinner meeting in the Hut. The dinner was well attended, having an overflow crowd for the program we had prepared. Many of the men had to stand around the room. Our subject was the "Past, Present and Future of Myers Park Baptist Church." Jane Ellen Norman, Georgia Daniels, and I each took a part. The fund-raising campaigns were very successful, and when the Sanctuary was completed, it was without a debt.

In the beginning, we had a prayer meeting service each Wednesday night. Later on, Dr. Heaton started Thursday Night Family Dinners. At the dinners, plates were served in the kitchen of the Fellowship House, and then we walked across to the Hut where tables were set up. Dr. Heaton led us in a devotional service while the children had a separate program that was prepared for them. There was a happy and close relationship among all the members. I'm sure we must have had some bad weather in those days, heavy rains and snows to walk through to the Hut, but I do not remember any. The fellowship is what I remember most.

I am now 94 years old, and I look back on the past fifty years at Myers Park Baptist Church with warm remembrances. I am so happy that I could be a part of this great experience.

[Ina Short has been a member of our Myers Park Baptist Church family since 1943.]

Special Remembrances of Our Senior Ministers

Milton Short

Dr. Heaton provided guidance for the building of the Sanctuary as did Dr. Marney for the Education Building and Dr. Owens for Southminster. But their acclaim lies more in their personal impact and sermons that still inspire church members fifteen or forty or even fifty years later.

Dr. Heaton's "He Whom a Dream Hath Possessed" remains the call to action for the members. Too, I often think of his modern parable "The Horse's Idea of Horsemanship." Heaton at thirty-five personally led most church activities including the great shoe swap. He sat twenty-five adults in a ring on the floor of the Hut and had them remove and pass around left shoes until he shouted, "Stop!" This was quite an ice-breaker. Fellowship is strong with someone who is walking around in your left shoe.

Dr. Marney said from the pulpit that in the early 1500s Francisco de Coronado was searching Arizona for the Seven Cities of Cibola and suddenly came upon the Grand Canyon, then unknown to Europeans. The entourage stood in electrified silence, unable to find words. Finally, Coronado said, "Something happened here." Coronado's experience, said Marney, is akin to the wonderment of a devoted Christian who seriously confronts the life of Christ.

Fifteen years ago, Dr. Owens discussed the impact of Christian churches on society in a vivid figure of speech: the shares of stock in insane asylums would go way up if there were no churches. Forthright in stating his views, Dr. Owens supported the 1977 change to districts in city council politics, saying to this audience that southeastern dominance could not be justified. Again, his comment that extremists seek to intimidate those for whom truth is complicated sets the tone for free dialogue at Myers Park Baptist Church.

For 50 years we have been blessed with inspired ministers who have splendidly proclaimed the real Christian faith in an era when Christianity is incessantly misused by avaricious electronic and mass mail "ministries."

[Milton Short has been a member of our Myers Park Baptist Church family since 1943.]

Stories of Remembrance

Ralph and Lauretta Short

At the Swinsons' summer home in 1945, a party was given in my honor. When the best "fish fry" in the South was well under way, I learned a new word to add to my D.C. and Blue Ridge Mountain vocabulary—"hush puppy."

That same year Mrs. Frank Dowd had a party for the Music Committee in her lovely home on Queens Road, and my eyes fairly bugged out when I saw the largest silver tray of fried chicken, piled about ten inches high from one end to the other. What a welcome they gave me for considering coming to Charlotte!

My stay for a weekend with Mr. and Mrs. Jamie Bryant on the corner of Wendover and Sharon Roads, was truly one of the most heart-warming experiences I have ever had in the life of our church. Every morning, before breakfast, there was a beautiful Bible reading and a blessing, to say nothing of the white organdy bedspread and pillow shams on the high poster bed in which I slept. Through ALL the years, the Bryants have been a blessing to me.

A luncheon in the lovely home of Dr. and Mrs. Ralph Jarrett and the beauty of the scenery outside her bay window was an experience fit for a queen.

And how many times did Mrs. Charles Upchurch play for me when I was traveling back and forth between Charlotte and Washington on emergency visits as well as vacations? Laura Stroupe Jarrett, another gracious person, gave of her time in the same way. More recently, when I broke my wrist, Marty Jowett Forrester gave up a birthday party for her dear daughter to pinch hit *that afternoon* for a wedding and the service the next day! Among others to whom I am indebted were Mary Lou Beaman Paschal, Sara Starnes Spencer and my dear friend, Ruth Barrett. God bless you all!

Voice lessons were given in an upstairs bedroom of the old Efird home (Fellowship House) that had been changed into a studio where I taught voice to students who knew more about singing than I did! "Who'll Buy My Lavender?" brought down the house at a voice recital sung by Flo Core, Essie Wood, and Sarah Meigs Benoit. Mrs. J.B Efird invited us to have this recital in the living room of her home on Selwyn Avenue. (It is used today for Children's Music by Queens College.) The Fellowship House was the center of all "through-the-week" activities.

The Saturday night "HUT CLUB," decorated with checked tablecloths and candlelight, was a special time for the "young" people of the day. Oh, how we danced on the spot where the chapel (approximately) now stands!

On Halloween, I answered the door for the "umpteenth" time for dear Mrs. Slaughter, my wonderful landlady. Thinking I would scare the next bell ringer to death, I crawled on the floor and jerked the door open with the loudest "BOO!" I could project, and there, standing in the doorway,

was Dr. George Heaton! He merely wanted me to come to his home to celebrate his wife's birthday. I hope I made up for my humiliation by teaching him the box step and the jitterbug!

And, finally, though there are many more memories, this one is to this day our own Ralph and Lauretta Short "on the homefront" joke. When the excavation for the Sanctuary was taking place, Blythe and Isenhour needed a place to dump the dirt in order to build the church. Where did they dump it? Of course, Ralph seized the opportunity, and now we live (and hope to stay for a long time to come) on the Holy Land!

[Ralph Short has been a member of our Myers Park Baptist Church family since 1943. Lauretta short has been a member of our Myers Park Baptist Church family since 1946 and served as our Church Organist from 1945 to 1948 and, again, from 1974 to 1987.]

Reminiscences

Ann Smith

My reminiscences are filled with warmth and acceptance since my first visit to this church in March of 1954. George Heaton, Carlyle Marney, Gene Owens, Bea Blankenship, Alma Cordle, Emory Trainham, Randy Mishoe, Dick Sutton, and Mary Conrad have been among my many teachers.

Through the years of my journey, there have been days of great joy and moments of deep despair—and, in between, the even days of going along from week to week, just enjoying the daily routine of living. Through all of this, it has been comforting to me to be able to worship and to express my faith in a church community where caring and support are an ever-present reality and stimulating and exciting to know that the church's policy of an open pulpit and congregation will ensure that here one is able always to live with the necessary tensions of change. Here my need to question, to express doubt, and to be secure that I am allowed to be the seeker that I am is satisfied.

The years in a person's life between the ages of twenty-six and sixty-six bring challenges that are both personal and communal—challenges that one must face and attempt to move toward solutions as one attempts to remain steady in the face of unsteady circumstances. It is a privilege to worship God in the company of others who acknowledge the realities of this truth and permit one to work toward healing without mask or denial.

As the celebration of our fifty years nears, I continue to be grateful for the opportunity this congregation has afforded me to celebrate—not just now, but every day!

[Ann Smith has been a member of our Myers Park Baptist Church family since 1958.]

My Exciting and Meaningful Years at Myers Park Baptist Church

Charles A. Smith

It has been twenty-two years since I was a member of the staff at Myers Park Baptist Church, yet the memories of that experience will always linger as some of the most exciting and meaningful years of my life. Let me offer the following thoughts.

- The last half of the decade of the 1960s witnessed the emergence of issues that were destined to change the lives of everyone in ways we had no ability to comprehend. The "rock and roll" generation of the 1950s had given birth to the "rock-generation" and its fascination with mind-altering drugs with strange-sounding names. It was popular to write about the "generation gap" and the supposed alienation which existed between adults and youth.
- The social protests of the civil rights movement had given way to political protests against America's war in Vietnam.
- The influences of these developments were certainly prevalent among our community at Myers Park during the three years I served on the staff. While these popular issues occupied much of our attention, the things I remember about the people and the relationships we were able to build during those years are far more important as I reflect upon this period in my life.
- Within weeks of beginning my responsibilities at Myers Park, there came that fateful Sunday when Bud Wilmot was called upon to substitute for Dr. Marney who had been rushed to the hospital with an apparent heart attack. The weeks and months that followed seemed endless. The staff was determined to carry on the work of the church although it did so under a cloud of uncertainty concerning Dr. Marney's ability to return. Somehow we knew that a great era in the life of the church was coming to an end and, while none of us wanted to admit that to be the case, we did our best to prepare the church to face its future responsibility.
- During the interim, as the Search Committee began its work, I had the opportunity to work with one of my seminary professors, Dr. Stewart Newman. I had seen him in the classroom but now had an opportunity to hear him preach and address the needs of our people during this time of transition.
- I remember assisting in the worship service with Dr. Gene Owens the Sunday he returned to preach his "trial sermon" and how impressed the members of the pulpit committee were with the prospect of having Dr. Owens accept its call.
- Perhaps it was inevitable that each staff member would move in different directions following Marney's resignation, but the transition was made more difficult by the knowledge that the Myers Park expe-

rience would be impossible to replicate once our days there had ended.

- I will never forget, sitting in my office on a Friday afternoon, hearing a knock at my door from a desperate young student who had been kicked out of his home by his father for bringing home failing grades on his report card. The student's request was to be allowed to spend a night in the basement of the church. Today, that young student is a very successful attorney who graduated from college and graduate school with honors.
- The challenges of the Vietnam War led some of our students to protest in ways that were beyond the comprehension of parents and leaders in the community. One of those young persons today is a very successful medical doctor practicing in another city.
- I remember the parent who brought his son to my apartment at 2:00 a.m. to have his son confess to me that he had committed a major indiscretion at a football game at Memorial Stadium following a homecoming celebration.
- Then there was the infamous "Ashtray" which came to symbolize a place of acceptance for many of those young people who simply needed a place that was perceived as belonging to them without the imposed formalities of society.
- I remember chaperoning an event we called the "Battle of the Bands" where we allowed numerous high school music groups to compete for a cash prize. There were three of us who had volunteered to chaperone that night, and over three hundred young people from all over Charlotte descended upon the church in ways in which we were unable to cope.
- The retreats at camps in the North Carolina mountains were incredibly valuable for the young people as well as the adults who had volunteered to work with them.
- We introduced team teaching in our Sunday School and witnessed our Sunday morning attendance rise from a low number of thirty to forty to a high of over two hundred.
- So many friendships were formed during those years which helped to shape my life and the lives of the young people who were in our program. It was difficult for me to understand at the time the fears of many of the parents and adults in the church as it concerned our youth program and our efforts to relate to the young people. Frankly, none of us knew with any degree of certainty that we were correct in our efforts. We simply knew that we were trying desperately to keep the lines of communication open in the knowledge that our problems could be ultimately solved. The potential for abiding relationships in the years to come was far more important than the issues that were the sources of our frustration. Perhaps it is fair to say that all of us grew as we lived through those difficult years and became better persons because of our struggles. As is always the case, God has a way of redeeming our darkest hours and bringing new life out of every disappointment.

- My years at Myers Park were some of the most important in my life. I regret so often being distanced from that community, as we have lived in Jupiter, Florida, since 1976. On a recent trip to Charlotte, I shared some thoughts about the church with a group of friends who attended worship that Sunday. Whereever my work has taken me, I have not been able to replicate the Myers Park experience. Myers Park is special and its uniqueness deserves to be nurtured for future generations.

The institutional church in America during the decades of the 1970s and 1980s has left a sad legacy. This is all the more reason why the Myers Park Church's commitment to deal honestly with "faith issues" brings it distinction. Religious integrity has few safe-harbors. Myers Park Baptist Church is one of them.

Congratulations and happy 50th anniversary.

[Charles Smith was a member of our Myers Park Baptist Church family from 1966–1969 and served as an Associate Minister.]

Visions and Memories of Early Days in Myers Park Baptist Church

Martha Springs

I let my mind and heart see the visions of the early days at Myers Park Baptist Church.

I see the old Fellowship House, the only building we owned. It was the old Efird House—a living room, sunroom, dining room, kitchen, and garage, and upstairs four bedrooms and a bath. We had many happy times here. Wednesday nights were family nights. We ate together, met new members, heard George Heaton speak, and enjoyed being together.

I see the building of the Huts. We had outgrown the Fellowship House. Our men with saws and hammers erected the Huts. I see Pop LeNeave, Lex Marsh, Alex Springs, and many others. What satisfaction we knew when the Huts were completed and we moved our meetings into them.

I see our boys as they led us a merry chase. We pulled them out of windows, out of the old swimming pool, out of all kinds of trouble. I see Greg LeNeave, Paul Biggers, the Springs boys, Winborne and Manley, Maury Johnston, Curt Rogers, Tate Bowers, and others—all wonderful, energetic, future leaders.

I see the older, more sophisticated boys: Dick Spangler, George Heaton, Jr., Carl Biggers, Charles Kuralt, and others.

I see the boys' choir. The mothers helped in giving the boys dinner before their rehearsal with Alice Berman. There was tall Sammy Williams, gifted singer Jimmy Preston, and the Kratt boys—red-headed Henry,

chubby Jamie, and blond Ted. And others. So many eager young faces. In my vision I hear them singing,

Be Thou my vision
O Lord of my heart.
Naught be all else to me
Save that Thou art.
Thou my best thought
By day or by night.
Waking or sleeping
Thy presence my light.

O God, may it ever be so!

A Memory of Public Speaking Classes

How exciting! We were to have a class in public speaking to be taught by the master speaker, Dr. George Heaton. I walked from home to the class at the church. On the way I met a new church member who was also walking to attend the class, Mrs. Martha Worrell. We continued our walk together that day and several others as the class progressed. We were not disappointed. The class was exciting! I remember many of the things Dr. Heaton said. The class gave me a deep appreciation for George Heaton's preparation for his sermons. How privileged we were!

A Memory of Jessie

Jessie, a master cook, presided in the kitchen. We took turns in helping to serve at family night. Our members frequently asked Jessie for her recipes. One time as I was working, I heard Jessie giving someone a casserole recipe on the telephone. It was a recipe that I had used many times so I knew what ingredients were in it. When Jessie hung up, I said, "Jessie, you left out the dry mustard when you gave that lady the recipe." She said, "Mrs. Springs, you don't expect me to give away my secrets do you?"

[Martha Springs has been a member of our Myers Park Baptist Church family since 1945.]

Memories of Early Years of the Church

Jennie M. Stickley

I recall shortly after the congregation moved into the Sanctuary, the members found the need for a temporary building in which to hold Thursday night family dinners, Scout meetings, etc. A few dedicated men

of the Church gathered together on Saturdays to saw, hammer, measure, etc. to build this needed structure. They had fun, laughed, joked, kidded and worked! Jack, my husband, who never had any experience in carpentry, would come home with sawdust in his hair, bruised fingers, etc. Finally, one of the guys said, "Stickley, why don't you leave the carpentry to the rest of us and you just help?" He took this hint and became the errand boy! "Stickley, hand me some more nails. Can you move that ladder over here? I need more paint."

Finally the structure was completed. It was enjoyed for years by the church members. Eventually several other structures were built and enjoyed.

[Jennie Stickley has been a member of our Myers Park Baptist Church family since 1943.]

What the Myers Park Baptist Church Has Meant to Me

Dorothy W. Story

Since becoming a member of Myers Park Baptist Church, I have witnessed many changes in my personal life as well as changes in our country and the entire world, but through all the changes, there has been one constant, and that has been my unshakeable belief in God.

Our church has been my refuge through many problems and much sadness and has inspired me always to go on trusting in God, knowing He will always take care of me and help me to rise above any adversity which may befall me.

It is with great pride I state that my trust and faith is constantly renewed through my association with our beloved Myers Park Baptist Church.

[Dorothy Story has been a member of our Myers Park Baptist Church family since 1943.]

Service and Joy

Bob Tobias

This church became my church about twenty-five years ago. Neta brought me here after we married in the Chapel on July 7, 1967. It is the only church I've ever belonged to because my father was an army man, and we travelled a lot. My mother was a religious person who did the best she could to give her children something to believe in. She did

well—it was from my mother that I learned to be a Christian.

Before making the commitment that would join me to this church, I resolved to be truly a part of it, support it with the best of whatever it needed from me. That has turned out to be a rather modest contribution without which the church would surely have prospered no less than it has with it. But, what a joy the giving has been to me. I gave a couple of happy years to the Elementary Department, learning how smart one has to be to stay ahead of those great kids (especially the ones who want to be bad.) Also, for about eight or ten years, I was a Wednesday night kitchen volunteer—right down my alley.

I reckon, however, that singing with the Chancel Choir has been the most pleasurable and rewarding service I have been able to give to this church. My enjoyment of music in the past has been in listening, and while that is certainly pleasure, I wanted more. One day I mentioned my up-until-then secret desire to make music to that great person, Jim Berry. I told him of my tryout for the West Point Cadet Choir at which I and about two thousand other fourth classmen individually sang "Glory to God" for old Fritz Mayer, the organist and choir director. Of course, I had to sing "Glory to God" for Jim in order to tell the story.

Well, old Fritz had said, "Next, man," and I was out. But Jim said, "You did that arpeggio well enough. Why don't you come warm up with me Thursday morning, and we'll see." And on Thursday, almost unbelievably to me, I became a member of the Chancel Choir. Imagine singing with all those wonderful singers, many with years of choir experience and some of whom are musicians of truly professional caliber. Well, I was overwhelmed! In the few years since that time, my great joy at being part of this choir has not diminished.

Which all makes me keenly aware that, as they say, "the giving is more the getting."

[Bob Tobias has been a member of our Myers Park Baptist Church family since 1974.]

Our Special Needlepoint Projects

Neta Tobias

For many years ushers at Myers Park Baptist Church were identified by imitation white carnations on their lapels. Some folks wanted to replace them with something more distinctive. Bea Blankenship had often spoken of needlepoint badges, and because needlepoint is one of my best-loved pastimes, I let it be known that I would like to gather some volunteers to make them. There was an enthusiastic response from a good many women (and even a couple of men) who volunteered to do the needlework.

Because the badges would be small (about three inches square), I felt they should be done in petit point so that the designs would show better detail. The designs would incorporate traditional Christian symbols, and the colors would match the colors used on the altar frontals: green, purple, white, and red. Eighty badges would be needed—enough of each color for twenty ushers. Bob and I designed four different badges and made up kits of patterns and materials.

Volunteers worked all through the summer, and we formally presented the badges to the church in October of 1983. In the course of this project, friends and strangers were brought together, and many good and lasting relationships were born which have enriched our lives.

And, we're doing it again! I am a member of a new group now which has been meeting twice a month for over a year making needlepoint pillows and kneeling pads for the altar area, as well as offering plate silencers. We plan to have them ready for the Fiftieth Anniversary Celebration. I am so glad to be a part of this project which will add to the beauty of our Sanctuary.

[Neta Tobias has been a member of our Myers Park Baptist Church family since 1958.]

The Candelabra Choir!

Bill Treadwell

Public Announcements have haunted me throughout my ministry; even with years of public speaking, the details of announcements still give me difficulty.

The Music Division of the Myers Park Baptist Church was thrilled to add a new choir for teenagers to our graded choir program and named it the "Cambiata" Choir. A Sunday I was presiding in worship was its first performance, and my task was to welcome the new group to our worship—hopefully, with clarity and enthusiasm.

The concerns of the church were shared with some ease, and the time arrived to welcome the new choir. A few introductory words were said about our anticipation and excitement with the creation of this new singing group—then I loudly and proudly welcomed the "Candelabra" Choir. When the words moved from my lips, I wanted to catch them and bring them back.

A glance at the congregation told me the mistake had not gone unnoticed. Dale slowly shook his head and bowed with a smile across his lips. Tom Holmes laughed aloud; he had a daughter in the group. My face glowed with the red of embarrassment.

The next week, in an effort to make amends, notes of apology were written to the leaders in the music department; and I took the hard teasing of the ministerial staff. Possibly now, the matter could be forgot-

ten. Dreamer! Not at Myers Park! A month or so later a cartoon of a candelabra and a choir appeared on my desk with the word, "Remember!"

I have requested that the Music Division name their choirs as adult, youth, and children; then those of us who must welcome them will have a chance.

[Bill Treadwell has been a member of our Myers Park Baptist Church family since 1985 and serves as an Associate Minister.]

Some Special Events that I Remember

John Wagster

We came to Charlotte in July, 1962, so my remembrance would be from that date.

When we arrived here, the church had just moved into the Great Hall and Education Building and everybody was pretty excited about that. During the rest of that year, particularly, we had a lot of interest in the Adult Division of the Sunday School and we had some interesting people to come in during that time. Most of them would come on Friday and stay over until Sunday, and usually they would have the sermon on Sunday morning because Dr. Marney was out of town frequently.

The first one that I want to mention was Dr. Christer Stendahl. He was Professor of New Testament at Harvard Divinity School, and he had a very interesting voice and dialect. When he gave his first lecture, this is what he said: "The Bible is a book, the Bible is an interesting book, the Bible is a sacred book and a holy book. To understand the Bible we have to learn `Biblish,' and we have to learn to understand `Biblish.'" He was

the only Scandinavian with whom I ever had any contact, and he wore a little tam around the church and campus most of the time. We enjoyed having him. I had always hoped that he might come back again, but he didn't.

Another interesting personality that we had for the weekend was Dr. Daniel D. Williams who was Professor of Systematic Theology at Union Theological Seminary in New York City. The Board of Education and the adult teachers had lunch with him on Saturday. He was very open and liked to answer questions, and we talked to him about what he was doing, what his program was, and he gave us a great deal of information. He made an impression on those that were teaching at the time.

Dr. Walter Harrelson, a native North Carolinian who had taught Old Testament at the University of Chicago Divinity School and at that time was at Vanderbilt in Nashville, came here two or three times in the next few years, and he was always interesting and helpful. He was the author of several books, including *Interpreting the Old Testament*.

Dr. Sam Miller, the only Baptist that has ever been Dean of the Chapel at Harvard University, visited us several times because he was a good friend of Marney and he was always welcome. In the '60s our choir, under the direction of Jim Berry, performed the oratorio *What Is Man?*, libretto by Dr. Miller, who was a guest. Ron Nelson wrote the music. Dr. Marney was the reader. It was a memorable occasion.

When Marney was here, often he would speak before dinner. We would eat dinner at the church at 5:30 Sunday afternoon, and afterward everybody would discuss with him what he talked about. Also in the '60s Bob McClernon, our adult education minister, on Sunday nights taught Bible. We would always meet upstairs in Room 252 and the room would be nearly full. We enjoyed that very much. That lasted for a long time, and then later, after Bob left, we began to have some teachers come over from Queens College on Sunday night. We would have an English teacher or a poet or studied books, and they were stimulating.

There was this "death of God" thing that came up back in the 1960s. That concerned me a whole lot—bothered me. One Sunday Marney said he would talk about that if we wanted him to. He talked about it on Sunday night and explained it. I felt so much better after that, and it finally just died out.

In January, 1977, for four Sundays the choir, under the direction of Jim Berry, gave Mendelssohn's *Elijah* with Dr. Owens and Dr. Dan White doing the liturgy (a part each Sunday). It was beautiful. Later they did Mendelssohn's *St. Paul* and Handel's *Messiah* the same way with Dr. Owens and Dr. White doing the liturgy. Both of these were very meaningful.

Dr. Owens, Dale Mullennix, and the staff have given themselves freely to the teaching of the Bible and theology. We have been blessed with their scholarship and skill.

[John Wagster has been a member of our Myers Park Baptist Church family since 1962.]

Finding a New Church Home (and More)

Catherine and Bill Wasserman

We were married on June 17, 1950, in Cochran, Georgia, and honeymooned in Tennessee and the North Carolina mountains. Two weeks later we arrived in Charlotte, North Carolina, to take up residence in our new home in Selwyn Village Apartments on Wakefield Drive.

Both of us, having grown up in true Southern Baptist tradition, soon began to inquire about available churches. We were told that the church nearest to us was a newly-organized one which was meeting in Belk Chapel on Queens College Campus.

A Sunday morning early in July found us seeking this new church, Myers Park Baptist. The minister that Sunday was a young Robert Seymour. He delivered a fine sermon, the congregation was very cordial, and after several visits we felt overjoyed at having found such a church. We thought Bob Seymour was the senior minister but later learned from new neighbors, Rosemary and Dick Overton, that Dr. George Heaton, the senior minister, was on vacation until September.

Were we in for a surprise upon his return! Needless to say, we quickly decided to join Myers Park Baptist Church, and we have been members here for forty-two years—the largest part of our lives.

How fortunate we were to have found our church!

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I'll always remember and deeply appreciate working with and learning from Bud Wilmot in the children's church school. What a help he was in the rearing of our own!

Many, many times I would come home from planning sessions with a new book, magazine publication, record or a new tape he had just received, simply because he said, "Catherine, take these with you. I know you'll read them." And I did.

[Catherine and Bill Wasserman have been members of our Myers Park Baptist Church family since 1950.]

Highlights

Louise and Howard Webb

I remember going to Sunday School and church in the old auditorium at Queens College. Also, we were married in the Fellowship House in 1945 by Dr. Heaton.

[Louise and Howard Webb have been members of our Myers Park Baptist Church family since 1943.]

The Fidelis Bible Class

Mary Lee Welch

On January 17, 1943, Myers Park Baptist Church was organized. In March of that year, my husband, W. J. Welch; our son, Jack Jr.; and I joined the church. (Our twins, Charles and Charlotte, were too young to join.)

At that time church services and Sunday School classes were held in Ninniss Auditorium at Queens College, and Dr. Ralph Jarrett, a dentist, served as the Sunday School superintendent. In early October, 1943, Dr. Jarrett sent letters to the women of the church stating that Bea Blankenship (Mrs. A. V.) was organizing a Bible class for young women. In response, eight women (Daisy Berry, Betty Ahearn, Pete Bowers, Melba Sloan, Betty Burr, Edna Little, Frances Vinroot, and I) met one day in October at Bea's home.

Bea Blankenship agreed to be our Sunday School teacher, and Betty Burr was elected president. With Bea's inspirational teaching and leading, our class grew rapidly, and by the end of the same month, we had twenty-five members. With constant growth, we had over one hundred members within five years. Bea continued as teacher except for a part of 1945 and 1946 when she was in California where her husband was in the Naval Engineers.

The class had become too large to meet in members' homes for our monthly meetings by 1949. Fortunately, at that time the church decided to organize classes by age categories; hence, our class was divided into two groups—Women's I and Women's II. Because those names suited neither class, Women's I became Fidelis Bible Class (fidelis means "faithful"), and Women's II became Fair Caldwell Class.

Eight members began the newly formed Fidelis Bible Class in April, 1949, with Frances ReVille as our first president. Yellow and White were chosen as our colors (our yearbook always has a yellow cover), and the yellow rose as our flower. "He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much" (Luke 16:10) became our Bible verse.

In June, 1949, the twenty-three ladies who had then joined our class were made our charter members, and Bea Blankenship, one of those, became our teacher in September. Once again, we were able to hold monthly meetings with a program and light refreshments in members' homes. Over the years we have had some excellent speakers and musical entertainers.

Our husbands and other guests were invited to our First Annual Birthday Banquet held in April, 1950, and Mae Meadows was installed as our second president. During her term our studies were entitled "Great Men and Women of the Bible" and "Growing in Christian Living." A daily nine o'clock morning prayer circle was started with each member being encouraged to participate, a practice we still continue.

When the Sanctuary and Education Building were finished in 1952, we met for our monthly meeting in the Pine Room, but for a long time now we have met in the Ladies' Parlor. On the second floor of the Education Building we have a nice, large room where we meet for our Sunday School worship. Our Annual Banquet in April continues to be our most important yearly event.

At our monthly meetings we have not only entertainment but a business session at which an offering is taken. That has enabled us to contribute to many worthy causes (sending a child to Anita Stroud's Camp in 1958, providing a one-hundred-dollar scholarship to Charlotte College, and donating to Crisis Assistance, the Parson of the Hills, Loaves and Fishes, the Soup Kitchen at St. Peter's Church, the Salvation Army, Rebound, and others). We are a class that loves our church and community and which also takes care of each other in time of need.

Our class also has had a lot of fun with party themes such as the following: "A Tacky Party," "A Box Supper" at Bert Williams' home, "A Sliced Watermelon Feast" at Frances Vinroot's home, and a "Come As You Are When You Answer the Phone Party" (several showed up in pajamas and robes for this one).

Through the years the Fidelis Class has remained a Bible class which has been blessed with excellent teachers: Bea Blankenship, Alma Cordle, Mary Conrad, Virginia Mays, Evelyn Baker, and Chuck Iliff, our present teacher. Always, the purpose has been Bible study and participation in activities of the church with emphasis on spiritual growth and usefulness.

Even though our membership is now fifty-two, our procedures remain constant: new officers are installed, group captains announced (the class is divided into eight groups), and new yearbooks distributed—all on the first Sunday after Labor Day. Each Sunday we sing "Happy Birthday" to members who are celebrating birthdays that week, and the Vice President of Ministries gives a report on any known illness or sorrow in the class.

The Fidelis Bible Class owes its existence to the vision and dedication of Bea Blankenship. Without her inspiration, there might not be a Fidelis Bible Class, and that would be a tragedy.

It seems fitting to end this story with our benediction, "The Lord watch between me and thee, when we are absent one from another." Genesis 31:49.

[Mary Lee Welch has been a member of our Myers Park Baptist Church family since 1943.]

The Pretenders

Joe Williams

A few years back when Clayton Brooks was manager of our church's house and grounds staff, he injured his back. An appointment was made with Dr. Robin Hicks for an examination. It just so happened that Dr. Gene Owens had an appointment just before Clayton's. Robin decided to play a trick on Clayton, so he dressed Gene up in a white coat, head mirror, etc. When Clayton came in, he was shown into an examination room. Shortly, Gene walked in but Clayton did not recognize him. Gene asked him to take off his clothes and get up on the table. After some thumping, tapping and "um-m-m-ming," Gene announced that he needed to have an operation. At that point, Robin walked in and saved Clayton from the ordeal. After introducing Gene, he congratulated Clayton for being such a trusting soul.

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One summer a group of us from the Elementary Department went to Green Lake, Wisconsin, for training. As was the custom, each year's training program had a major theme, and that year we studied "The Ministry of the Laity" by Francis O. Ayers. Each year Louis Blankenship would conduct a service around this subject. Each of was charged with a great responsibility and were told we were ministers. We were all very much impressed with all that was said—some more than others, of course. The ones most heavily affected were Bill Pinson and Bill Menzies. In fact, they were so influenced, they went straight to the Administration Office and had their name tags changed to read "Rev." instead of "Mr."

[Joe Williams has been a member of our Myers Park Baptist Church family since 1949.]

The Ministry of Music 1952-1958 at Myers Park Baptist Church

Harvey Woodruff

In response to requests that I render some statement concerning the years of my service to Myers Park Baptist Church as Minister of Music (1952–1958), let me say simply that for me, "It was the best of times; it was the worst of times." Those years brought me many treasured friendships, and I shall never forget the warm support of the choir members, the choir mothers, and many of the congregation who worked with me and shared with me the ideals and aspirations of our church.

In the last two years of our ministry, we were directing the activities of eleven different choirs, including the Myers Park Youth Choir of one hundred selected high school students from Myers Park Methodist, Myers Park Presbyterian and Christ Episcopal as well as Myers Park Baptist. That group reached a high level of artistic achievement in the field of sacred choral music and became a potent influence in the lives of many young students.

In retrospect, I feel, and fervently hope, that the five years I was privileged to serve our church in this capacity were years of healing and stabilization.

Let me mention, too, that when I arrived in Charlotte in the early summer of 1952, it was my intent to make just an overnight stay. Many thanks to Lauretta and Ralph Short who hosted us that first night. Charlotte has been our home throughout the forty years since, and, with Marion I express our deepest gratitude to all of you who have made that possible.

[Harvey Woodruff has been a member of our Myers Park Baptist Church since 1952 and served as our Minister of Music from 1952 to 1958.]

Some Things I Wanted to Tell You in 1952 Some Things I Did Not Know Until 1992

Marion Connor Woodruff

We are reminded of our debt to our founding fathers, but we do not hear so much about the care of our founding mothers. When we entered our new Sanctuary in 1952, it was due to one of those that our church bulletin was so handsome with an etching of the Queens Road East entrance and the tall steeple rising from the trees.

Elizabeth O'Neil Verner had just published her first book, *Prints and Impressions of Charleston,* and many of those etchings were of church steeples

glimpsed over chimney pots, iron gates, high walls, and always through magnificent trees. It was to our benefit that she was a personal friend of Elizabeth Dowd (Mrs. Frank Dowd, Jr.), and that she felt compatible with our church, which from the beginning, nestled in the trees and never looked brashly new or awkward. It was only after a hurricane named Hugo uprooted two most-needed trees that our church was exposed and ill-at-ease. All of the lost trees caused regret, but the one providing shade for the side entrance and the very large oak which protected us from the numerous wires and signs at the meeting of Queens Road, Selwyn Avenue, and Queens Road East are, to me, the most missed trees in all of that devastation.

When I watched the oak, measuring six feet across its base, being hauled away, I remembered a morning almost fifty years ago. The church family had gathered before sunup for breakfast so we could watch the arrival of the earth-moving equipment. Dr. Heaton climbed into the high seat of one of those monsters and drove it a few yards for the first dig. After seven years as a church, we were going to have a Sanctuary! Every tree that could possibly be saved was already clearly marked. It was our founding mothers who knew that most men, if armed with nothing more than a plain garden hoe, will level everthing in their path. I would like to have the whole story as to who was able to threaten all of those workmen with permanently wearing dunces' caps instead of hard hats if a single tree was damaged.

Mrs. Verner's drawing of our church was so right that it has been the face plate of all our church publications ever since. Mrs. Dowd had a supply of large prints made from the 10 1/2" x 14" original. Those were presented to incoming ministers and outgoing laymen who rendered unusual services. Those prints show in more detail the pineapple urns in the broken pediments over the doors.

When I kept fretting in committee meetings that I wanted to add a footnote to my article on the architecture of our church about those broken pediments and that the pineapple was a colonial symbol of hospitality, Hans Newelt, our business manager at the time, objected. He could not find in his research that such was the case. I dropped the matter but, secretly, I know he had done his research with his eyes closed. Proof was all over: in folk textiles, stencils, furniture (especially high boys and secretaries), magazine articles, and the famous pineapple gates in Charleston. Sometimes it was spelled out, as in *Country Home*: "...the table centerpiece includes a pineapple, a colonial symbol of hospitality." More often it was assumed that you knew; in an article in the Charleston paper: "The joggers stopped for a breather in the spray of a pineapple-shaped fountain."

Other touches, in the interest of being authentic, are the bricks. The yuppie names of the reds and pinks in the super box of Crayola crayons will not give you an idea of the color of those bricks. In the '20s and '30s, the color would have been designated as ashes-of-roses, but I haven't heard anything called that in a long time. Most of the exposed ends are

variegated gray. You now think our church must seem to be in the midst of a veritable measles attack. Not so! Bess Benoit (Mrs. Henry Benoit, Sr.) solved it when she said, "Our church is the color of little red grapes covered with early morning frost."

Those bricks are laid with alternate stretchers and headers. This is to give strength and is still mentioned in writing about Charleston houses. The *Charlotte Observer*, May 28, 1992, tells of the opening to the public of Charleston's oldest structure, the 1712 William Rhett house. "The long-short-long masonry pattern is called Flemish bond."

"Authentic" became our operative word, largely due to our founding mothers who took time to THINK so that when all building was complete, we didn't have to say, "We should have done this differently." The tall, round-topped windows do not contain regular window panes but the more expensive, slightly defective, wavy panes known to the earliest churches.

When we walk the granite aisles, we are lighted by brass Williamsburg sconces, and those aisles are made severely tidy by the walnut gates enclosing the pews.

All of this authenticity brought many visitors: the curious of Charlotte, entire building committees from neighboring towns,...a North Carolina author visited us and since he knew that all those authentic touches are not sold by the gross at the nearest building supplier, he included Dr. Heaton in his book, referring to him as "Saint George, the Expensive."

Since I want this to be mainly about the etching of our church, I'll add a few words about Mrs. Verner. She died in 1977 at the age of 95. She lived almost until the end in an apartment over the Tradd Street Studio where she had worked since 1938. It was from this studio that she became famous for her delicate watercolors of the Charleston flower vendors. When a former Charleston mayor ruled that the vendors were rude and dirty and could no longer sell flowers on the street, Mrs. Verner and her garden club picketed city hall. Knowing when he was licked, the mayor came out, smiling, arms outstretched, saying, "Ladies, I surrender. From this time on, the garden club will be in charge of issuing licenses to the vendors." They still brighten the street across from the post office with their buckets of colorful flowers.

Mrs. Verner's daughter now puts a big price on those prints—they sell in the four-figure bracket. I learned this from the clippings kept in the Carolina Room of the Main Library. From them you can also learn that she was the first woman in the history of the University of North Carolina to deliver a regular university lecture and that her etchings were the first by a South Carolina native to be filed in the Library of Congress.

Mrs. Verner was an advocate of "beauty is truth and truth is beauty." The old houses, churches, and streets of her works show the peeling paint and rain-covered cobbled stones as they were. She broke this rule once, out of kindness to Maum Manda. From her long essay accompanying *Prints and Impressions of Charleston*, written when dialect was acceptable:

"Please, Missus, tek de swag outen my roof when you write 'em down." So out it came, and Manda's cabin is uncommonly neat in the etching.

I can't imagine why we would need another face plate for our church literature, but in that eventuality, I hope we meet someone equally kind, and she or he will again have our steeple glimpsed behind tall trees.

[Marion Woodruff has been a member of our Myers Park Baptist Church family since 1945.]